the weekly
Standard

FEBRUARY 23, 2004 $3.95

THE CONFESSIONS OF AL SHARPTON
Matt Labash

THE RIGHT WAR FOR THE RIGHT REASONS

"With all the turmoil surrounding David Kay's comments on the failure to find stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons in Iraq, it is time to return to first principles, and to ask the question: Was it right to go to war?"

ROBERT KAGAN & WILLIAM KRISTOL

#BXNFMVD ******AUTO**5-DIGIT 94301
#UNZ0555B096 1#302604 WK 5551
RON UNZ DEC 06 04 000031
371 000403
555 BRYANT ST 001
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SPOTLIGHT™

ONE NETWORK TAKES YOU BEYOND THE SOUND BITES FOR THE WHOLE STORY.

THE HUNT FOR OSAMA BIN LADEN

Where has he been? How have we hunted him? When will we find him?

SUNDAY 9PM E/P

Discovery CHANNEL

©2004 DCI

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

February 23, 2004 • Volume 9, Number 23

2 Scrapbook... *Idiocy at Duke, porn at Harvard, and more.*

4 Casual..... *Christopher Caldwell, flâneur.*

6 Correspondence..... *Stanley Kurtz and his critics.*

9 Editorial ..... *For the Marriage Amendment*

Articles

10 Kerry Nation? *Don't bet on it.* ..... BY FRED BARNES

11 Oil's Well . . . *Even at $35 a barrel, the economy will probably be fine.* ..... BY IRWIN M. STELZER

13 Toadying to the Mullahs *The triumph of hope over experience.* ..... BY AMIR TAHERI

15 Victims and Terrorists *The Chechens' story.* ..... BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

16 One Hundred Days of Arnold *Muscular governance in Sacramento.* ..... BY BILL WHALEN

18 Everyone Appeases China *France is just the latest.* ..... BY ELLEN BORK

Cover: Reuters / Corbis

Features

20 The Right War for the Right Reasons
The liberation of Iraq was abundantly justified. ..... BY ROBERT KAGAN & WILLIAM KRISTOL

29 The Confessions of Al Sharpton
Running for president to escape the shadow of Jesse Jackson. ..... BY MATT LABASH

34 Arab Democracy, American Ambivalence
Will Bush's rhetoric be matched by American deeds? ..... BY TAMARA COFMAN WITTES

Books & Arts

39 Israel's Right to Fight *A menu of new books on the Jewish state.* ..... BY AITAN GOELMAN

44 Art of Darkness *The extraordinary work of Francisco Goya.* ..... BY THOMAS M. DISCH

47 THE STANDARD READER ..... *John Podhoretz's* Bush Country.

48 Parody..... *Looking back at the Surgeon General's Report on Secondary Cholesterol.*

William Kristol, *Editor* **Fred Barnes**, *Executive Editor*
David Tell, *Opinion Editor* **Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson**, *Senior Editors* **Richard Starr, Claudia Winkler**, *Managing Editors*
Joseph Bottum, *Books & Arts Editor* **Matt Labash**, *Senior Writer* **Stephen F. Hayes**, *Staff Writer*
Victorino Matus, David Skinner, *Assistant Managing Editors* **Jonathan V. Last**, *Online Editor*
Katherine Mangu-Ward, *Reporter* **Matthew Continetti, Rachel DiCarlo, Erin Montgomery**, *Editorial Assistants*
Lev Nisnevitch, *Art Director* **Philip Chalk**, *Production Director*
Max Boot, Tucker Carlson, John J. DiIulio Jr., Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein, David Frum, David Gelernter, Reuel Marc Gerecht
Brit Hume, Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, Tod Lindberg, P. J. O'Rourke, John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer, *Contributing Editors*
Terry Eastland, *Publisher* **Peter Dunn**, *Advertising Director*
Nicholas H.B. Swezey, *Advertising & Marketing Manager* **Kelly A. Lindner**, *Advertising Manager* **Lauren Trotta Husted**, *Circulation Director*
Tina Winston, *Finance Director* **Catherine Titus Lowe**, *Publicity Director*
Taybor Cook, Carolyn Wimmer, *Executive Assistants* **Michael Goldfarb**, *Staff Assistant*

the weekly Standard

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the first week in January, the second week in July, the second week in August, and the second week in September) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. For a copy of THE WEEKLY STANDARD Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. THE WEEKLY STANDARD Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is 1-202-293-4900. Advertising Production: Call Nicholas H.B. Swezey 1-202-496-3355. Copyright 2004, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in THE WEEKLY STANDARD may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. THE WEEKLY STANDARD is a trademark of News America Incorporated.

BPA INTERNATIONAL

www.weeklystandard.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stupid Professor Tricks

The chairman of Duke University's philosophy department, a man named Robert Brandon, has gotten himself in a bit of hot Internet water over a quote he recently gave to the *Chronicle*, Duke's principal campus newspaper. It seems that an undergraduate student group, the Duke Conservative Union, took out ad space in the *Chronicle* for an open letter addressed to university president Nan Keohane, in which the Union alleged an "increasingly politicized"—and ideologically monochromatic—atmosphere in the school's humanities departments.

It further seems that the Union, by way of support for this claim, included in its ad the results of a most interesting exploration through publicly available North Carolina voter-registration records. Cross-referencing the names of 178 Duke humanities faculty members and deans against the state's voter lists, the university's student conservative association found 142 registered Democrats, 28 independents, and 8 Republicans. That's an 18-to-1 partisan imbalance, for those of you doing the math at home.

And what has this amusing datum got to do with Professor Brandon, the philosophy department chair? Well, the whole thing right away created quite a lot of "Oh, dear, how gauche!" tongue-clucking down in Durham. The general character, quality, and intelligence of which was beautifully captured by reporter Cindy Yee's "react piece" in the very next edition of the *Chronicle*, last Tuesday, which contained the following, timeless passage:

> Some argued that the political imbalance within the humanities departments is to be expected, and in no way reflects the University's lack of commitment to true intellectual diversity. "We try to hire the best, smartest people available," Brandon said of his philosophy hires. "If, as John Stuart Mill said, stupid people are generally conservative, then there are lots of conservatives we will never hire. Mill's analysis may go some way towards explaining the power of the Republican party in our society and the relative scarcity of Republicans in academia. Players in the NBA tend to be taller than average. There is a good reason for this. Members of academia tend to be a bit smarter than average. There is a good reason for this too."

Needless to say, Professor Brandon's remark about knuckle-draggingly stupid Republicans instantly made its way into the blogosphere, where Brandon was just as instantly—and justly—ridiculed for (a) his ignorance of elementary logic ("stupid people are generally conservative" does not mean that "conservative people are generally stupid"); (b) his ignorance of 19th-century philosophy and politics; and (c) Brandon's general vanity and . . . well, knuckle-dragging stupidity.

Here's one for you, Professor Brandon: Maybe you've got no conservative or Republican colleagues in your department because no such person would even think to apply for a job with the likes of you. ♦

Stupid Student Tricks (and administrators who fall for them)

From the Wednesday, February 11, edition of the *Harvard Crimson*:

> After flipping through the pages of *Squirm*, a Vassar College erotica magazine, the Committee on College Life (CCL) voted to approve a student-run magazine that will feature nude pictures of Harvard undergraduates and articles about sexual issues at its meeting yesterday.
>
> Fourteen members of the CCL approved *H Bomb*—a magazine that will be similar to the Vassar publication—as an official Harvard publication. Two members abstained.
>
> Assistant Dean of the College Paul J. McLoughlin, a CCL member, said he consulted University General Counsel Robert W. Iuliano '83, the University news office, and University spokesperson Robert P. Mitchell before the decision. "I needed to see if there were liability issues," McLoughlin said.
>
> In order to avoid liability, students will not be able to take nude pictures inside of Harvard buildings, according to McLoughlin. . . .
>
> In early December, Katharina C. Baldegg '06 and Camilla A. Hrdy '05, the two students who proposed the magazine, met with McLoughlin to begin the approval process for *H Bomb*.
>
> Baldegg said that she did not think the process was especially difficult. CCL, which is composed of students, faculty, and administrators, approves the creation of all new student groups, including publications.
>
> "I don't think we faced any opposition. People have been very open about it," she said.
>
> Hrdy said that "initially there was some concern about the nudity aspect," but that CCL members eventually "got past the fear of porn."

And also the fear of looking foolish, apparently. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Speaking of Fools

Remember how, back in the mid-1990s, CBS News used to constantly have Kevin Phillips on its broadcasts as a "Republican political analyst"—even though all he ever seemed to do was fulminate about "his" party's various evil deeds? Well, folks have long since wised up; hardly anybody calls Phillips a "Republican" these days. CBS News, for example, stopped calling him that sometime in the fall of 1996, roundabout the time they stopped using his services altogether.

Which is a policy, THE SCRAPBOOK humbly submits, that our friends over at National Public Radio ought to consider belatedly adopting. Here, it's not a labeling problem at all; NPR's always been admirably scrupulous about that. For more than a decade already, the network's been reserving regular air time for little pretaped opinion droppings from Phillips, and a search through the Nexis transcript database suggests—amazing, no?—that they've never once the whole while called the man a Republican. On NPR, he's just "commentator Kevin Phillips."

Trouble is, he's also a venomous conspiracy theorist. Consider Phillips's amazing and altogether baseless slander of Laurence Silberman, senior judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. In the world of appellate law, the undeniably conservative Silberman is the closest thing there is to a universally admired man; his professional reputation is beyond reproach—as many, *many* perfectly liberal, perfectly Democratic lawyers and fellow jurists will tell you. And yet there was Phillips—on NPR just last Monday—falsely accusing Silberman, President Bush's appointee to co-chair the new post-Iraq intelligence review commission, of past involvement in Middle East "cover-ups."

In 1980, according to Phillips, Silberman "attended at least one of the 'October Surprise' meetings where an Iranian representative discussed what Iran would want in exchange for keeping the hostages" (until after Reagan could be elected president). Then, years later, "Silberman was one of two judges in a 2-1 decision that overturned Oliver North's Iran-contra conviction." Special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh was upset about that, Phillips points out, arguing that President Bush should have chosen an "honest" man instead of Silberman.

Um, anybody home over at NPR?

The "October Surprise" conspiracy theory—as was eventually confirmed by multiple American news organizations, Democratic investigators in the House of Representatives, and a Senate subcommittee chaired by one John F. Kerry—was a top-to-bottom fabrication originating with followers of Lyndon LaRouche. Oliver North's Iran-contra conviction was overturned because Lawrence Walsh had obtained it on the basis of evidence hopelessly tainted by North's testimonial immunity grants from Congress; few people, at this point, would dispute that Silberman's ruling was the correct one.

We don't have high expectations of NPR, but even they can do better than this. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Casual

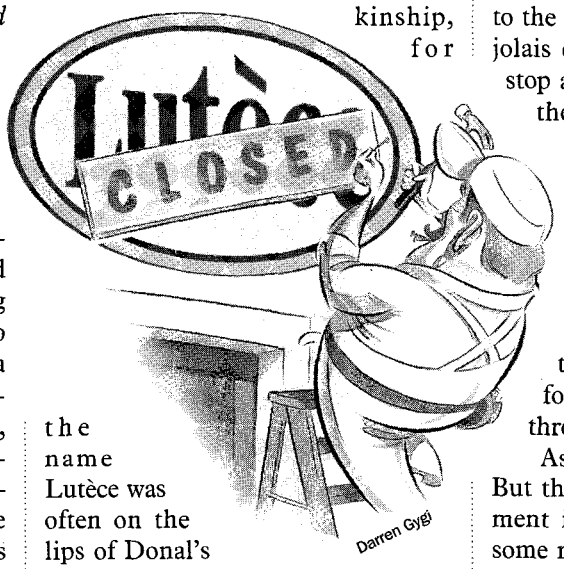
A Table at Lutèce: A Memoir

Lutèce, for four decades New York's premier French restaurant, is closing for good this month. The news has hit me hard. I remember Lutèce from the go-go 1980s. Giants walked on Broadway in those days—Leona Helmsley and Ivan Boesky, Keith Hernandez and Vernon Mason. My perch in the Manhattan publishing world gave me a commanding view of it all. I had just been promoted to deputy associate proofreader on books like *Around Lake Huron With Your Winnebago*. Heady days indeed: A five-figure income—that magical threshold—was so close I could smell it.

It was a time of twilight concerts in Central Park and champagne breakfasts at the Waldorf, of whispered intimacies in Checker cabs and wild nights downtown snorting cocaine with fashion models. Not so much for me—for me it was more a time of getting mugged, feeding quarters into the dryer at the laundromat, and craning to avoid the damp underarms of straphangers on the F train—but for other people, definitely. Life seemed full of promise, ambition's fires were ablaze, magic was in the air, and so was the name Lutèce.

For me, Lutèce has always been at the pinnacle of French cuisine in America. It was the seventh arrondissement's *pied à terre* in Midtown Manhattan. So it may come as a surprise that although it was just half a block from my office, I didn't dine there most days. Actually, if you insist on being literal-minded about it, I never once set foot in the place. But I did move with the Lutèce crowd. Occasionally on my strolls past the elegant brownstone that housed the restaurant, I'd stop and chat with those culinary alchemists who worked such magic with the simplest of ingredients. The guy at the door would inquire what I wanted. I'd respond with a wry, "Hey! Anyone famous inside?" and he would speak a few words in French that sounded like "*move along*."

I more often lunched in Donal O'Houlihan's. Although I liked to deprecate it as "the lunch room," it resembled Lutèce in its ability to spur the imagination of a young literary man on the rise. I was not alone in noticing this mystical kinship, for the name Lutèce was often on the lips of Donal's patrons. "This burger here," a fellow at the bar might say. "Lutèce it ain't, but it's good eatin'."



The bar was always packed and the drinks were so cheap it would have been a waste of money to eat. It was mostly Irish people—usually there was a two-day-old videotaped hurling match playing on a TV over the bar—but the place also drew aspiring writers who hadn't yet caught their break.

For some reason, most of the people in my literary set were at least 60 years old. They must have done their writing at night, because they were in Donal's all afternoon. One wrote editorials for a Catholic weekly. Another sold ads for *Coupling* magazine, even though he didn't seem to know much about electronics. The most successful was Joe Blau. He had a newsletter that catered to the bar trade called *Profitable Drinking*. He didn't have an office, but he didn't need one, because he got better ideas in Donal's. We never saw a copy of this newsletter, but Joe's theory was that bartenders (or "beverage vendors") didn't do enough to sell to women (or "broads"). Selling alcohol to broads was easy, if one only remembered that they hated alcohol. ("It's a fact," said Joe. "You can ask my wife.")

The key was to keep a lot of dairy products and a blender behind the bar and use it to mix them various fizzes and floats. To this end, Joe had personally invented a number of drinks, from the Seagram's 7 sundae to the Chocolate Gibson to the Beaujolais colada. His creativity did not stop at urging these concoctions on the barman. I myself, for instance, drank stinky, room-temperature English bitter in those days, and Joe once asked me, "You like that Double Diamond?"

"Love it," I replied.

"Next time you're out with the wife," he said, "order one for her, and have the bartender throw a scoop of ice cream in it."

As I say, those were heady days. But the thing about intellectual ferment is, it cannot last forever. For some reason—just the vicissitudes of the literary life, I suppose—people in Donal's kept getting fired from their jobs. Joe got into an argument with the bartender over one of those accounting questions that were roiling Manhattan back then. In this case, it was something about whether Joe's beverage ideas constituted payment-in-kind against his bar bill. He stormed out, never to return. The old gang broke up.

Obviously something similar happened at Lutèce. And I for one am not too cold-hearted, as they clear out their last soufflé pans, escargot clamps, and beer straws, to spare a thought for their pain.

Christopher Caldwell

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE HANNIBAL CLUB-USA WELCOMES
HIS EXCELLENCY ZINE EL ABIDINE BEN ALI,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

From the shores of the ancient city of Carthage, today's Tunisia projects a message of hope. In the words of the State Department's Spokesman Richard Boucher, "Tunisia's been a voice of moderation. Tunisia has been a voice for regional harmony. Tunisia has been a voice for putting effort and resources into development."

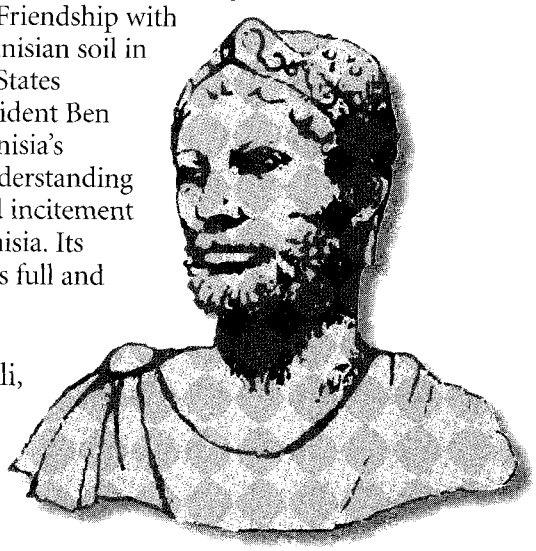
Under the leadership of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia has always played a constructive role on the world scene. It has traditionally participated in international peace-keeping operations. Its call for international solidarity to combat exclusion and poverty led to the creation by the United Nations General Assembly, of the World Solidarity Fund. In 1965, President Bourguiba was the first Arab leader to call for peace negotiations with Israel. Under President Ben Ali, Tunisia continues to work for a lasting peace in the Middle East and has lent support to the Middle East peace process in all its phases.

Domestically, the accomplishments of Tunisia in fostering economic development, expanding the middle class to 80% of the population and reducing poverty to 4%, reflect a social and economic reality of shared prosperity and equal opportunity for all citizens. Continued growth and economic reform have created a favorable business climate and earned Tunisia the reputation of "a country that works" to use the expression of the renowned author and journalist Georgie Ann Geyer.

Tunisia's reformist record toward women is equally impressive. As early as 1956, Tunisia adopted the Personal Status Code, banning polygamy and repudiation. Additional reforms adopted in 1993 consolidated the rights of women as full partners to men. About 10,000 business managers in Tunisia are women, as are 25% of the judges and over half of today's university students.

With eight legal political parties, Tunisia's 2004 elections are expected to enlarge the scope of domestic pluralism. The overwhelming majority of newspapers are privately owned and a private radio station has started broadcasting. Other private radio and television stations are on the horizon.

Tunisia and the United States have been friends, allies, and partners throughout their common history. In 1797, our new Republic signed a Treaty of Friendship with Tunisia. Thousands of U.S. soldiers who fought on Tunisian soil in World War II, rest in peace and dignity in the United States Memorial Cemetery of Carthage. As we welcome President Ben Ali to the United States, the Hannibal Club salutes Tunisia's tolerant policies and the role it plays in promoting understanding between peoples, cultures, and faiths. Hate speech and incitement to violence and terrorism have no place in today's Tunisia. Its cooperation with the United States against terrorism is full and unwavering.



In extending a warm welcome to President Ben Ali, we celebrate the shared bonds of history and common commitment of our peoples to freedom and peace.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Decline and Fall

Stanley Kurtz's "The End of Marriage in Scandinavia" (Feb. 2) eloquently warns of how the acceptance of gay marriage in Nordic countries further widened the separation of marriage and parenthood in that region, which is now trundling down the slippery slope of family decline. Sadly, Kurtz can't see that the acceptance of unmarried cohabitation, which separated marriage from sex, was the start of the slide.

By increasing the frequency of sex among unmarried couples, the sexual revolution only increased the rates of unplanned pregnancy, abortion, children born out of wedlock, and divorce.

Mary Kaercher
Farmington Hills, MI

After reading Stanley Kurtz's "The End of Marriage in Scandinavia," I came away befuddled: The article does not even attempt to accomplish Kurtz's purported goal—that is, to show empirically that same-sex marriage causes irreparable damage to heterosexual marriage.

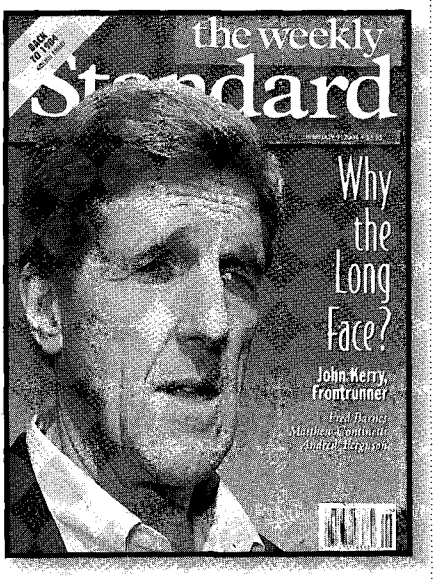
Instead, Kurtz shows that heterosexual marriage in Scandinavia has been on the decline for decades, and then proposes a laundry list of reasons why marriage there has declined. Tacked on to the end of the list is a rise in domestic gay partnerships throughout the period of heterosexual marriage's decline. But a social scientist as talented and credentialed as Kurtz should know that correlation does not amount to causation.

Michael Sellitto
New York, NY

Finding few articles that address the issues surrounding gay marriage, I read with great interest "The End of Marriage in Scandinavia" by Stanley Kurtz. Unfortunately, Kurtz's article does not quite inform us about the issue.

After describing Kathleen Kiernan's division of Europe into three zones based on varying levels of cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births, Kurtz quickly concludes that the gay marriage movement "not coincidentally" follows upon increases in the out-of-wedlock birthrate. He goes on to argue that, "This suggests that gay marriage is both an effect and a cause of the increasing separation between marriage and parenthood." At best, Kurtz has established an association between these events and some possibility of its being an effect, but certainly not a cause. As a research fellow at the Hoover Institute, Kurtz must know that even a certain association does not imply any certainty of cause and effect.

Kurtz next argues that his contention is most clearly evident in Norway. I would agree that it is possibly logical to say the gay marriage issue brought change to the Norwegian Lutheran Church, and, if this church is



dominant in Norway, such changes *could* have contributed to change in other social norms.

However, Kurtz's logic seems anchored in his previous logical fallacy. There are many factors active in even conservative churches today as humanistic perspectives defeat the dogma of the past. All of these produce widespread social divisions and, occasionally, adverse social consequences. In the locally dominant and conservative church of my youth, the most divisive issue to date has perhaps been the ordination of women.

Shall we, like Stanley Kurtz, conclude that those churches which have ordained women have led to a rise in out-of-wedlock births? I suspect that few would see the logic in such an argument. Or, for that matter, the logic in an argument like Kurtz's.

John T. Wierenga
Grand Rapids, MI

Stanley Kurtz responds: Marriage has been in decline since the 1960s. Any analysis of the role of Scandinavian same-sex "registered partnerships" (de facto gay marriage) in furthering this decline must begin with existing factors. Mary Kaercher is correct to note that premarital cohabitation is one of the factors already encouraging marital decline. I say the same in my article.

Michael Sellitto correctly points out that correlation does not equal causation. How, then, do scholars make the jump from correlation to causation? Scholars agree that, when it comes to the out-of-wedlock birthrate, ideas and values are key variables. They establish causal links by identifying correlations, then connecting those correlations to a cultural analysis. For example, traditionally religious districts in Norway have low out-of-wedlock birthrates. Since traditional clergy preach against unmarried parenthood, scholars reasonably conclude that traditional religion contributes to low out-of-wedlock birthrates.

My causal analysis is of the same order. Take, for example, the socially liberal Norwegian county of Nordland. Churches in Nordland fly the rainbow flag to signal their acceptance of registered partnerships. These churches forbid clergy to preach against homosexual activity. And as I showed in my article, the same clergy who oppose same-sex registered partnerships lead the opposition to unmarried parenthood.

The out-of-wedlock birthrate for first-born children in Nordland county in 2002 was a striking 82.27 percent—significantly higher than the already high out-of-wedlock birthrates in Norway as a whole. When we find unusually high out-of-wedlock birthrates in a county where the gay marriage battle has resulted in a purge of traditional clergy, it is reasonable to conclude that Norway's system of de facto gay marriage has had an effect on the rise of unmarried parenthood. If conservative preachers in traditional counties help keep out-of-wedlock

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

birthrates down, then a purge of traditional clergy elsewhere should act as a stimulus to that rate.

On John Wierenga's point, I don't doubt that a whole spectrum of religious divisions could help weaken traditional clergy. Yet it's worth noting that Norway's Lutheran Church has ordained women for some time, without that leading to outright purges of conservative clergy. Yet this is what the gay marriage issue has done in Nordland.

In "The End of Marriage in Scandinavia," I spoke of the way in which secular social scientists, like Kari Moxnes and Kari Melby, had largely replaced the clergy as social arbiters for many Norwegians. Moxnes and Melby teach at a university that borders the county of Nord-Troendelag. The out-of-wedlock birthrate for first born children in Nord-Troendelag in 2002 was a startling 83.27 percent.

If it's legitimate for scholars to connect the influence of conservative clergy to low-out-of-wedlock birthrates in traditional districts of Norway, then we can make a parallel move in a socially liberal district like Nord-Troendelag. Secular social scientists preach to their classroom "congregations" and through the media, explaining that gay marriage legitimates unmarried parenthood. It's reasonable to connect this novel gospel to rising out-of-wedlock birthrates in districts where radical social scientists have influence.

So it is possible to isolate the causal mechanism in the case of gay marriage, even if the influence of other factors on the overall decline of marriage is real. But the point of my piece will have been missed if gay marriage is seen as just one end of a laundry list of causes. Gay marriage is important because it is part of an emerging Nordic pattern—a pattern which goes well beyond the type of marital decline familiar to Americans. The Nordic pattern is characterized by an extreme separation of marriage and parenthood, a separation reflected in high rates of parental cohabitation, strong legal equality between marriage and cohabitation, and (de facto) gay marriage.

Where gay marriage in Sweden was the last part of this system to be put in place, gay marriage had greater impact in Norway. By helping to drive up Norway's still moderate rates of parental cohabitation, gay marriage helped solidify the legal equalization of marriage and cohabitation, which only hit Norway in the nineties.

Gay marriage's effect in the United States would be even greater. Since marriage and cohabitation are still legally distinguished in America, and since our parental cohabitation rate is only beginning to rise, gay marriage would be the leading edge of the Nordic system in America, not the tail end. It would accustom us to a Scandinavian-style separation of marriage and parenthood, and that would mean more parental cohabitation, and eventual chipping away of legal distinctions between marriage and cohabitation.

Mary Kaercher is right that the strong separation of marriage and parenthood typical of Scandinavia has a precedent in premarital cohabitation. That doesn't mean the choice is all or nothing. For all of marriage's problems, Americans still strongly associate it with parenthood, as the Scandinavian comparison immediately reveals. If we adopt gay marriage, the doorway to the Scandinavian system is open. And what we've learned is that, in the sections of Scandinavia where de facto gay marriage is almost totally accepted, marriage itself has almost totally ceased to exist.

Kerry On

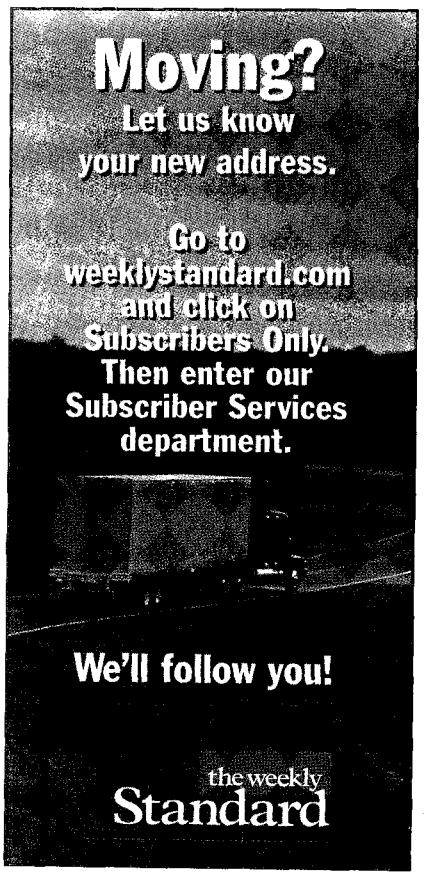
Andrew Ferguson's "Arms and the Man" (Feb. 9) brings home an important point: Indeed, John Kerry is a hero. Let not a single Republican "operative" or the self-important Wesley Clark say differently.

The problem is the man in office years later. Ross Perot said, in one of his more lucid moments during the debates of 1992, that what a person does during his youth should not impact our thinking toward him as an adult. But when people are older, in office, and making bad decisions, such things should affect our perception of their credibility and fitness for leadership. That statement was meant to downplay Bill Clinton's Vietnam subterfuge, and refocus attention on George H.W. Bush's errors in judgment as president.

Perot's observation is equally appropriate in the case of John Kerry. Nobody can muddle the man's sacrificial service for his country and for freedom while under enemy fire. But Kerry also cannot escape his liberal record as lieutenant governor of Massachusetts and in the U.S. Senate, and his remarkably disturbing penchant for Clintonian political opportunism.

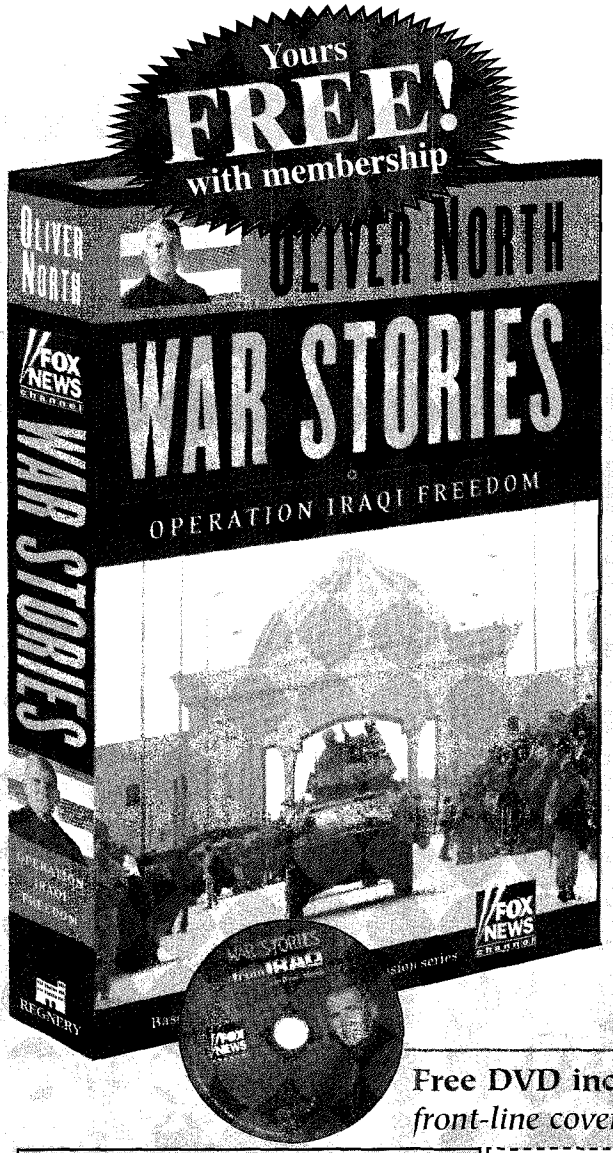
Things do change over time. If Kerry switched from war hero to reflexive liberal, so be it. Now we know how to evaluate him. But he is also an infinitely more troubling candidate if he attempts to retrospectively recast his liberal record, of which he has said he is proud. The rather sloppy molding of his career choices, like a third-grade ceramics project, into an image which he believes casts a more moderate, electable image is the very thing that makes one unfit for the presidency. We tried that in the 1990s. The result was disappointing.

Peter Byrnes Jr.
Severna Park, MD



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On the ground in Iraq with Oliver North



The inside story of a victory the media is trying to reverse

The Courics, Koppels, and Sulzbergers of the world are trying to take away our victory in Iraq, but Oliver North knows better. He was there. In ***War Stories: Operation Iraqi Freedom*** he sweeps aside the empty, second-hand chatter of liberal pundits to give you a riveting, eyewitness account of the heroism, courage, and unflagging patriotism of the American military forces that ended Saddam Hussein's bloody tyranny.

Embedded with Marine and Army units for Fox News during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Colonel North vividly tells the whole story that his news camera gave glimpses of during the campaign to liberate Iraq. From the opening seconds of the war - when North witnessed the conflict's first American casualty - all the way to the takeover of Saddam's hometown of Tikrit, ***War Stories*** is an exhilarating day-by-day diary that offers you an opportunity to see the war in Iraq not as the liberal media would like you to see it, but as it unfolded before the eyes of those who fought it.

Join the Conservative Book Club and learn about the latest crop of American heroes: those who fought and won Operation Iraqi Freedom!

Free DVD included: *Stirring video highlights from Col. North's front-line coverage of Operation Iraqi Freedom*

Benefits of Membership and How the Book Club Works

INSTANT SAVINGS! Join today and get *War Stories: Operation Iraqi Freedom* absolutely FREE, plus shipping and handling. Then take up to one year to buy two more books at regular low Club prices (20-50% below retail). After you have paid for your books, your Membership can be ended by you or the Club. Plus you will also get the opportunities to buy from our list of Superbargain books that the Club regularly offers. These books are offered at 70-90% discounts!! (Sorry, Superbargain books don't count toward your book commitment).

SHOP AT HOME CONVENIENCE! Up to 16 times a year you will receive the Club Bulletin packed with the kind of books you will want to read and own. Each Bulletin will describe a Featured Selection chosen just for our Members. Also included are a number of alternate selections about politics, religion, history, home schooling, investing, and other areas of interest to conservatives.

CBC ONLINE! You can now read about and conveniently order CBC books from our website at www.conservativebookclub.com. Same discounts apply, of course. And, with regularly scheduled live chats with our authors and members-only bulletin board, you can keep up with the conservative community on a range of important issues.

100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEED! If you are not completely satisfied with any book, return it and receive a complete credit. Plus you will always have at least ten days to make your decision to receive the Featured Selection. If you ever have less than ten days, you simply return the book at Club expense for a full credit. One Membership per household please.

☐ **YES!** Please enroll me as a member of the Conservative Book Club under the terms outlined in this ad. Send ***War Stories: Operation Iraqi Freedom*** for **FREE** and bill me just for the shipping and handling. I then need to buy only two additional books over the next year at regularly discounted Club prices (20-50% off retail).

C1243-AZ

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Email _____

• Prices slightly higher in Canada • Membership subject to approval by the Conservative Book Club

Fill out this coupon and mail to:

CONSERVATIVE BOOK CLUB®
Conservatives Serving Conservatives for 40 Years

1147 **P.O. Box 97196, Washington, DC 20090-7196** 6405

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the weekly Standard

For the Marriage Amendment

In an act of astonishing self-righteousness and self-congratulation, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has forced the question of marriage upon the entire United States.

A dozen legal battles stand between the Massachusetts court's dictate for one state and the legal redefinition of marriage in the rest of the nation. Each of these battles is important, and each must be fought. But they are, to a large degree, merely holding actions and last-ditch attempts to use some courts to limit other courts. Short of an all-out balance-of-powers fight between the branches of the Massachusetts state government, there will be legal same-sex marriages in the United States in three months—and directly afterward, we will have court cases in every other state demanding recognition of Massachusetts's licenses. Judicially ordered homosexual marriage has arrived for the entire nation, however much Americans might have hoped to avoid the question, and immediate intervention at the highest level of national law is necessary if we want to stop it.

"If judges insist on forcing their arbitrary will upon the people," President Bush declared in his State of the Union address, "the only alternative left to the people would be the constitutional process." Judges in Massachusetts have now insisted, and the only serious alternative is an amendment to the United States Constitution defining marriage as the legally recognized relation of a man and a woman and withdrawing from courts the power to expand that definition to other human relations. The Federal Marriage Amendment currently before Congress accomplishes both these tasks. Strong presidential and legislative leadership will be required to see it passed and sent to the states for approval. The time for that leadership is now.

In its entirety, the amendment reads: "Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution or the constitution of any State, nor State or Federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups."

Some opponents of homosexual marriage have objected that the amendment is too weak and the first sentence purely verbal, doing nothing to preserve the actual institution of marriage. But when the assault on marriage is definitional in its essence—when courts are forcing legal recognition of homosexual unions by redefining the word "marriage," as though by calling a cat a bird they could make it fly—the correct response is, in fact, a definition. The framers of the Constitution did not envision that the nation's judges would need instruction in the meaning of the word "marriage," but since they do, an amendment is necessary to give it to them.

Meanwhile, some supporters of homosexual marriage have argued that the amendment's second sentence bans civil unions and prohibits state legislatures from granting privileges to any human relation other than marriage. This is manifestly wrong: Every sponsor of the bill is on record as denying it—and conservative critics are vociferating against the amendment precisely because it *doesn't* outlaw civil unions. The second sentence is directed at courts, stripping from them the power to compel homosexual marriage by appeal to other constitutional provisions. Insofar as the amendment affects legislatures, it merely requires them to specify the benefits they wish to give to relationships outside marriage—which is what civil-union legislation ought to do in the first place.

Homosexual marriage is not a "wedge issue" being pushed for electoral purposes by Republicans. Indeed, the political advantage is not entirely clear. If activists convince the media to paint the Federal Marriage Amendment as prejudice against homosexuals, and if Democratic candidates are allowed to dodge the issue, Republicans could find themselves injured by the fight during the fall election.

But what choice is there? We have a national issue *now*, forced upon us by the judicial will of the Massachusetts high court. In the absence of a national reply, the activists will simply keep pushing—as proved by San Francisco's illegal granting of marriage licenses to homosexuals last week, solely to create cases to take to court. This issue must come before the people themselves, and when courts cast their political preferences as constitutional law, only a constitutional amendment can answer them.

—*William Kristol and Joseph Bottum*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Kerry Nation?

Don't bet on it.

BY FRED BARNES

REMEMBER THE BEAR in the woods? It was featured in the most devastating of President Reagan's TV ads in the 1984 presidential race. An angry, menacing bear was shown prowling through a forest. "There's a bear in the woods," the narrator said. "For some people the bear is easy to see. Others don't see it at all. Some people say the bear is tame. Others say it's vicious and dangerous. Since no one can really be sure who's right, isn't it smart to be as strong as the bear—if there is a bear?" Then a man with a gun appears and the bear takes a step back. The final words on the screen: "President Reagan, prepared for peace."

The ad never mentioned the Soviets, the Cold War, the Red Army, Communists, or Reagan's Democratic opponent, Walter Mondale. It didn't need to. It was clever and amusing, but it made a point. Reagan would pursue peace through strength. His opponent might not see the threat to the United States posed by the bear, the symbol of the Soviet Union. But why should voters take a chance? They didn't. Reagan won reelection overwhelmingly.

I cite the bear in the woods ad as an example of how President Bush's reelection campaign can go after his likely Democratic rival, John Kerry. The key is not to scream, "Liberal, liberal, liberal." That rarely works anymore. What should work, though, is a TV spot with wit and subtlety that plays up a Kerry weakness. Take Kerry's insistence that the terrorist threat to this country is "an exaggeration." A droll but pointed anti-Kerry ad along the lines of the bear in the woods practically writes itself. Other ads do too, notably ones with clips from the fevered, over-the-top attacks on Bush by Al Gore ("betrayed the country"), Wesley Clark ("not patriotic"), and Howard Dean ("the enemy").

But if Kerry is a target-rich environment, why are Republicans and conservatives despairing over Bush's chances of defeating him? The answer is they've succumbed to panic. Sure, Bush has had a bad month.

Presidential campaigns unfold in phases, and this is the Kerry phase. The storyline for the moment is: Kerry wins. There's nothing the president can do about it. But his time will come soon enough.

His State of the Union address was flat. The failure to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq (yet) is embarrassing. The National Guard flap is a distraction. The deficit is nothing to brag about. And Kerry has emerged from nowhere as a formidable foe who looks all the better because he's not Howard Dean.

Presidential campaigns unfold in phases, and this is the Kerry phase. The storyline for the moment is: Kerry wins. Every week, sometimes twice a week, he beats his Democratic rivals. John Edwards, Wesley Clark, and Dean serve as the patsy Washington Generals who lose every game to Kerry's Harlem Globetrotters. This produces a stream of favorable stories about Kerry. Indeed, the Kerry phase may last through Super Tuesday on March 2, and there's nothing the president or his campaign team can do about it. Their time will come soon enough.

For Bush operatives, the problem with Kerry is where to begin. National security? Gay marriage? Flip-flops? Special interests? Beginning with national security makes the most sense since it's Kerry's weakest issue. It's the one he least wants to discuss. All that bravado about "bring it on" if Bush wants to raise national security actually means "don't bring it on." By talking tough, Kerry hopes to scare Bush off. The emphasis on Kerry's heroism as a young naval officer is designed to inoculate him on national security. It shouldn't. He's voted against practically every weapon the military relies on, and he's made a strong bid to slash intelligence funding. Cutting the CIA budget may have looked safe in the 1990s, but post-9/11 it doesn't.

The Bush campaign is inclined to ding Kerry as a phony because he's been on both sides of so many issues. This, by the way, makes it difficult to tag him as an unswerving liberal. While he favors higher taxes, he voted in 1986 to cut the top rate on individual income to 28 percent. Bush's tax cuts brought the top rate down to only 35 percent. But playing both sides of an issue could hurt Kerry on gay marriage. He opposes gay marriage but isn't for a constitutional amendment to bar it. He says states should decide the matter, but he voted against the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996 that allows states to do just that. Trying to reconcile these conflicts may tie Kerry in knots.

Kerry's inconsistency on Iraq is his greatest liability, not just because he's taken incompatible positions, but because he's trifled with a serious national security issue. He voted against the Gulf War in 1991, for the Iraq war resolution in 2002, and then against $87 billion to fund the

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Iraq effort. The only coherent explanation for these votes is political expediency. He voted each time for what would advance his political career as a Democrat. When those votes began to sour, he changed his tune. Once the war to drive Saddam Hussein from Kuwait became a popular success, he said he had backed it all along. This year when Democratic elites turned against the war, Kerry suddenly adopted an antiwar position, explaining his vote for the war resolution as merely a vote to "threaten" Iraq, not invade.

Bush should have no trouble scoring off Kerry on issue after issue. Politics, however, is a strange business. You never know what will stick. The charge that Bush shirked National Guard duty in Alabama in 1972 and 1973 didn't catch on in the 2000 campaign, but now it has touched off a press feeding frenzy. So maybe even sly and humorous TV ads won't persuade voters of Kerry's shortcomings. Perhaps a more blunt approach will work. Perhaps not.

Bush has one thing, and probably two, to fall back on. The first is the economy. There's every reason to expect growth of 4.5 percent to 5 percent in 2004. But will it be a jobless recovery? Not likely. The Bush economic team projects 2.6 million new jobs this year, wiping out the losses of earlier years. The Federal Reserve figures on 1.5 million to 2 million. The Blue Chip Forecast of top economists pegs job growth at 2 million. They all may be lowballing. In the 1990s, a year with 4 million new jobs was followed by a year in which 3.5 million were created. Several quarters posted job gains of one million. In any case, no president seeking reelection—and unchallenged for his party's nomination—has lost with an economy like this.

There's always Iraq, where everything depends on the turnover of sovereignty on July 1. If it goes well—which means neither civil war nor anarchy—the Iraq issue will remain a positive for the president. If the immediate result in sovereign Iraq is mixed, Bush may still claim success. The recently intercepted memo from terrorist leader Abu Musab al Zarqawi suggests anti-American diehards are rapidly losing heart.

Nothing is more pathetic in the Washington political community these days than tremulous Republicans and conservatives who whine about how Bush may lose to Kerry. Well, he might, but don't bet on it. A simple rule is worth recalling: In politics, the future is never a straight-line projection of the present. The media may think polls showing Kerry ahead of Bush in February are predictive of what will happen on November 2, but that's foolishness. The primaries will end in a few weeks and the Kerry phase of the campaign will fade. Unless Bush stumbles badly, the next phase will be his. ♦

Oil's Well . . .

Even at $35 a barrel, the economy will probably be fine. BY IRWIN M. STELZER

GEORGE W. BUSH thinks the biggest danger to his second term comes from John Kerry, but it may come from $35 oil. His political team worries that last week's decision by the OPEC oil cartel to cut output, in order to keep oil prices up, will kill off the economic recovery. They can't forget what Dan Yergin, head of Cambridge Research Associates, keeps telling television audiences: Every recession since the 1970s has been associated with high energy prices. So the White House abandoned its usual policy of not reacting negatively to just about anything the oil cartel does by issuing a statement appealing for restraint: "It is our hope that producers do not take actions that undermine the American economy and American workers, and American consumers for that matter." For Bushies, that is what passes for sharp criticism of the Saudis and their OPEC partners.

The cartel met in Algiers last week, worried that warm weather in the next few months would curtail demand for oil and bring down its price. Never mind that prices have risen about 15 percent this year, and already are well above what OPEC claims to be its target range of $22-$28 per barrel. Or that OPEC's revenue from international sales rose from $199 billion in 2002 to $247 billion last year, a jump of 25 percent. The producers, upset that their shrinking dollars don't go as far in Harrods and the south of France as they once did, have clearly, if covertly, raised their price target. Even though prices are now around $32-$33, OPEC's 11 oil ministers worry that the 1 to 2 million barrels per day they are producing in excess of their 24.5 million barrel per day quota will, come the spring thaw, cause a precipitous drop. "The market shows that there is an excess supply that worries everybody," Libya's Abdulhafid Mahmoud Zlitni told the press, suggesting that his country's admirable new restraint in the production of weapons of mass destruction will extend—less admirably, from Western consumers' point of view—to restraint in the production of crude oil.

Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahd al-Sabah, Kuwait's oil minister (you remember Kuwait, the country we rescued from Saddam Hussein), seems to have carried the day with his proposal that production be cut sharply, first by eliminating output in excess of quo-

Irwin M. Stelzer is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD *and director of economic policy studies at the Hudson Institute.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tas, and beginning on April 1, by reducing production quotas by an additional million barrels per day. Phil Flynn, a senior market analyst at Alaron Trading, expects prices to hit $34 in the spring. And Philip Verleger, a longtime student of oil markets now making his home at the Institute for International Economics, thinks that is optimistic: He sees $40 oil in our near-term future.

So we can file with other Saudi promises the statement made by Saudi oil minister Ali Naimi at the Davos World Economic Forum: "In OPEC in general and Saudi Arabia in particular we would like to see prices between $22 and $28, as near as possible to $25, and to stay there. That is the goal."

All of which has the White House worried that its forecast, released last week, that the economy will create some 2.6 million jobs this year, might prove to be wishful thinking. And more than a few businessmen fear that the nascent economic recovery will be strangled at birth by the rapacity of OPEC's cartelists. To decide whether that nervousness is well founded, it is necessary, first, to guess whether OPEC can indeed keep prices up by cutting output, and whether nonmember producers will step up production to fill the gap.

OPEC members are famous for cheating on quotas when high prices make it attractive to do so. That's why production now exceeds quotas by 1 to 2 million barrels per day. So it is unlikely that all of the agreed cuts will be realized. But with inventories at a 29-year low, OPEC members are likely to keep output close enough to agreed levels to keep supplies tight.

Which brings us to the possibility that non-OPEC members will fill the gap—and inevitably to guesses as to how Russia, which now produces almost as much oil as Saudi Arabia, will behave.

No one knows for sure what Vladimir Putin's plans are, other than to make certain that his nation's oiligarchs don't become effective political rivals. But we do know that Russian oil is relatively expensive to produce, and that costly additions to infrastructure (ports, pipelines) are needed if output is to be increased significantly. Witness the fact that Russia's exports to China are now being shipped by train, pending the construction of a pipeline.

We know, too, that Russia's ability to keep its fiscal position in good shape is mightily helped by high oil prices, reducing its incentive to upset the OPEC applecart. So it doesn't seem wise to count on Russia to step up output sufficiently to ease price pressures on Western consumers.

Nor can we look to Iraq for relief on the supply side of the demand-supply equation. Not only is it proving more difficult than anticipated to get Iraqi oil back onto world markets in significant amounts, but Iraq has made it clear that it plans to return to OPEC as the good cartelist it once was. Now that the Bush administration has abandoned plans to create a competitive private-sector oil industry in Iraq, and has opted instead for a state-owned monopoly of the sort that has brought stagnation and massive unemployment to other Arab producing countries, Iraqi cooperation with its fellow, state-owned producers is assured.

No one knows for sure what Vladimir Putin's plans are, other than to make certain that his nation's oiligarchs don't become political rivals.

The longer-term supply picture may be even worse. Some experts now say that Saudi Arabia's ability to step up production has been overstated, and that its ability to dampen prices by turning on the spigot has declined sharply. Venezuela, its president a Castro-sound-alike who has decimated his country's industry by meddling in the management of the state-owned oil company, needs but is unlikely to attract massive foreign investment. Wood Mackenzie, the respected oil consultancy, says that the North Sea is no longer a profitable area in which to look for new oil. And analysts at the White House tell me that African sources can't be counted on as "reliable."

At the same time, the best guess is that demand for crude will not, as OPEC claims, fall sharply in the spring. True, the International Energy Agency is predicting such a drop. But it has been wrong before. China's omnivorous appetite for oil continues unabated: Demand grew by 33 percent last year, which surprised most forecasters. And the U.S. recovery should drive demand here up, although not by as much as before the first oil embargo, after which America partially delinked oil demand from economic growth.

Combine that picture of relatively constrained supply and growing demand, and it would seem imprudent in the extreme to assume that the end of the cold snap will bring a collapse in oil prices, especially since the summer driving season is not far off.

Fortunately, prices in the $33-$35 range do not inevitably mean a screeching halt to the recovery. Some analysts are guessing that $35 oil will cut about one-half of a percentage point off the GDP growth rate. Perhaps. But hardly a reason for gloom. With forecasts for growth ranging from 3.5 percent to 5 percent, we will probably never know what might have been had prices stayed within OPEC's stated range.

That doesn't mean we should be indifferent as between $25 and $35 oil—cheaper is obviously better, especially for the motorist-consumers who have been fueling the economic recovery. They are likely to face spikes in gasoline prices during the summer driving season, in good part because new environmental regulations will reduce refinery

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

output and drive up the cost of converting crude oil into gasoline by mandating greater use of corn-based ethanol as a gasoline additive. No sense blaming OPEC for the pandering of Washington politicians to Iowa corn farmers.

But before we push the panic button, we should keep in mind that the recovery has been gathering strength even though oil prices have remained high; that more fuel-using industries rely on natural gas, the price of which has been falling, than on oil; that consumers continue to snap up gas-guzzling SUVs, suggesting that they feel they can afford higher prices for gasoline; and that there are powerful forces operating to keep the recovery rolling.

Fiscal policy is loose to the point of irresponsibility, as the president opts for guns, butter, tax cuts, prescription drugs, and Mars. Last week, Alan Greenspan used his semiannual report to Congress to reiterate his view that the absence of inflationary pressures allows the Fed to be "patient" before raising interest rates, adding relaxed monetary policy to the more-than-relaxed fiscal policy. Businesses that have delayed investments are loosening their purse strings as profits exceed expectations, and corporate demand for bank loans is rising for the first time in four years. Consumer confidence remains high and spending remains strong, driving retail sales in January to 5.8 percent above year-earlier levels. The service sector is growing at the fastest pace since we started keeping records in 1997, the manufacturing sector is also on the upswing, construction spending is at an all-time high, and the economy added at least 112,000 new jobs last month.

So America's real oil problem is not the price the cartel is currently able to extract. It is, instead, the threat to the continuity of Middle Eastern supplies from terrorists and fanatics who will be emboldened to create chaos in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other countries if we fail to achieve our goals in Iraq. ♦

Toadying to the Mullahs

The triumph of hope over experience.

BY AMIR TAHERI

"No, after you": Prince Charles in Tehran

EPA / Abedin Taherkenareh

A PERSIAN PROVERB SAYS, "He who makes the same mistake twice deserves disillusion." The British government is about to find out the truth of that saying, for once again it is wooing the mullahs of Tehran.

Last week Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, was dispatched to Tehran to raise the profile of the new policy. The pretext for the royal visit was a four-hour visit to Bam, the southeast Iranian city destroyed by an earthquake on December 26. But it was Charles's photo opportunities in Tehran with a string of mullahs, including President Mohammad Khatami, that dominated the visit.

Iran's state-owned media presented the visit as a tribute by the Western world to the Khomeinist revolution on its silver jubilee. At exactly the time that Charles was coddling the mullahs, the Iranian capital was hosting the notorious "10 Days of Dawn Revolutionary Festival" attended by terrorist masterminds and militants from all over the world.

Although it has critics within the British government, the policy of wooing the mullahs is backed by Prime Minister Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw. It began to take shape early in 2002, shortly after President George W. Bush described the Islamic Republic as part of an "axis of evil." Blair and Straw designed the policy as a means of counterbalancing their support for the liberation of Iraq.

The Blair-Straw argument is simple, not to say naive: The Khomeinist regime has matured and understands the realities of power. All that it demands now is an assurance that it will not be threatened with regime change. If the West lets the mullahs

Amir Taheri, an Iranian journalist, is the author of 10 books on the Middle East and Islam.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do as they please inside Iran, they might meet the West's demands on issues concerning the region.

Iran's cooperation is seen as important in three areas: bringing long-term stability to Afghanistan, creating a new regime in Iraq, and keeping the oil-rich Persian Gulf and the Caspian Basin as tension-free as possible. The Blair-Straw policy is based on the classical imperial doctrine according to which "the natives" may be allowed to do as they wish with themselves as long as they do not threaten the interests of the empire.

This message was conveyed to Iran's "Supreme Guide," Ali Khamenei, in the spring of 2002, when one of his closest advisers, Ardeshir Larijani, visited London and met with senior government figures. Since then Straw has visited Tehran five times, an all-time record for a British foreign secretary.

The trouble is that the Khomeinist regime has split between "reformers," as they are known in the West, and "conservatives," led by Khamenei. It now seems clear that the British connection has been one factor encouraging the conservatives to clip the wings of the reformers and tighten their own hold on power. They are expected to clinch that state of affairs on February 20, when a general election from which they barred a large number of candidates should give them control of parliament.

The British hope that the mullahs will do what Libya's Colonel Muammar Qaddafi has done and, once assured they will not be overthrown, start cooperating. To show that their policy is working, the British point to Iran's decision last month to freeze its uranium enrichment program—a program it had denied having for 20 years—and to allow additional inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The British policy of working with the status quo is, of course, in direct opposition to the Bush Doctrine, according to which the democratization of the Middle East is a vital security interest of the United States and other Western democracies.

British officials say London is trying to establish a dialogue with Tehran because the Bush administration is paralyzed by its divisions on Iran. It is no secret that the State Department has pursued a dialogue with Tehran in a string of meetings with mid-ranking Iranian officials over the past 10 months. Also, after the Bam earthquake, Washington sent a humanitarian team to Iran, the first official American delegation since the revolution.

But when the State Department attempted to capitalize on its "earthquake diplomacy" by proposing a delegation headed by Senator Elizabeth Dole, the Iranians backed out. Now London is presenting Prince Charles's visit as an attempt to resume that dialogue.

Will the Blair-Straw gamble pay off? In the short term, maybe; in the long term, no.

The mullahs have their backs to the wall and, weakened by their internecine feuds, will do almost anything to avoid outside pressure. Their oil industry, the source of almost 60 percent of the government budget, is in a state of dereliction and needs over $50 billion in investment just to stay afloat for the next decade or so. Also, with an American military presence now established in Iraq, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and the Persian Gulf, the mullahs feel that a lasso has been thrown around them. Thus, if the mullahs are assured that no one is going to export such dangerous ideas as democracy and human rights to their neck of the woods, they might adopt a low profile for the time being. Almost certainly, they will agree to make less mischief, not only in Afghanistan and Iraq but also in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories.

But that will be a tactical retreat. It is unlikely that the Khomeinist strategy can change. That strategy is based on the claim that Khomeini's brand of Islam must conquer the whole world, starting with the Middle East after the destruction of Israel.

This is not the first time that Britain, along with Germany and France, has tried a policy of "constructive dialogue" with the mullahs. Back in 1978, another Labour government, under Prime Minister James Callaghan, endorsed the Khomeinist revolution and pressed the shah to step down. The mullahs repaid Callaghan by closing the British embassy in Tehran and naming the street where it is located after Bobby Sands, an IRA terrorist who died in a British prison.

In the years that followed, Iranian agents and Lebanese Hezbollah militants working for Iran seized over 50 Britons, including a dozen nuns, as hostages, and held some of them for years—notably Terry Waite, a representative of the archbishop of Canterbury. The British embassy was reopened in 1988, then closed barely a year later when Ayatollah Khomeini issued a *fatwa* calling for the murder of British novelist Salman Rushdie. In 1989 and 1990, Arabian hit-squads murdered several Iranian dissidents in Britain.

Four months ago, Britain again ran into trouble with the mullahs after Argentina demanded the arrest of one Hadi Soleimanpour, the former Iranian ambassador to Buenos Aires, who had become a student in Britain. The British arrested the ex-diplomat and held him on an extradition warrant from Argentina, on charges of involvement in the bombing of a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires in 1994 that killed 85 people. Tehran reacted by sending gunmen to fire at the British embassy building in Tehran on two occasions. London caved in, releasing the alleged terrorist and allowing him to return home to a hero's welcome.

For 25 years the mullahs have lurched from crisis to crisis, always managing to hoodwink this or that Western power into helping them buy time. Today, part of the blame belongs to the Bush administration, which, having spelled out lofty principles for a new Middle East, appears unable to devise practical policies to implement them. As far as Iran is concerned, Washington would do well to learn from London's mistakes. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Victims and Terrorists

The Chechens' story.

BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

THE WEEKEND OF February 6 saw yet another deadly incident in Moscow, when an explosion in the subway killed at least 39 people. Predictably, Russian president Vladimir Putin blamed the bloodshed on "Chechens." Doubts abound, however, among ordinary Russians as well as journalists. Newspaper commentator Pavel Felgenhauer noted on February 10 that it was unclear whether the blast was a terrorist attack or an accident. Others have suggested the death toll was much higher.

It may well be that Chechens were involved in this dreadful event. Regardless, one must wonder how many people not particularly conversant with Russian history really know what the term "Chechen"—in many quarters, a synonym for "terrorist"—means. Who, after all, are these people, and how did they acquire such a terrible reputation? How did all this bloodshed come about?

The Chechens are a people from the northern Caucasus, who number no more than one million but have their own language. They were nature-worshippers until the late 18th century, when they were converted to Islam. Their mountain culture is traditional, with a legacy of communal law based on strict rules for reprisal in personal conflicts. In 1813, tsarist Russia seized the region from the shah of Persia, but the Chechens and the other Muslim peoples of the Caucasus fiercely resisted Russian encroachment.

Stephen Schwartz is the author of The Two Faces of Islam: Saudi Fundamentalism and Its Role in Terrorism.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Russian liberals and revolutionaries acclaimed the Chechens as freedom fighters, but in 1944, Joseph Stalin—himself a Caucasian, from Georgia, who loathed the Chechens as Muslims and as enemies of empire—had half a million Chechens deported to Central Asia, for allegedly preparing to collaborate with the Germans.

A generation of Chechens grew up in Kazakhstan and Siberia. Unsurprisingly, they became an underclass, with a high percentage of criminals and convicts. In 1957, under Khrushchev's reforms, they were allowed to return to the Caucasus, but Chechen gangsterism loomed larger than ever in Russian lore.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the Chechens demanded independence from the Russian Federation. A Russo-Chechen war began in 1994, and lasted for two years, ferocious on both sides. An uneasy peace, more like a truce, was effected by former Russian president Boris Yeltsin, and Russian troops withdrew in 1996.

But with the end of open war, a new element appeared in Chechnya: Saudi subjects who sought to restart the fighting as a means to promote the international spread of the strict Wahhabi cult. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of Wahhabi missionaries appeared in Chechen communities.

The Chechens had a reputation as tough men unwilling to surrender to the Russians, and they were no more inclined to accept Saudi religious colonialism; the Chechens follow a spiritual, Sufi strand of Islam. The Wahhabi offensive was led by a Saudi named Samir Saleh Abdullah al-Suwailem, alias Khattab, an acolyte of al Qaeda. First came the attempt to impose the Wahhabi version of Islamic law in Chechen villages, then the recruitment of separate Wahhabi militias—distinct from the main Chechen forces and intent on restarting the war with the Russians.

They succeeded. In 1999, Wahhabis based in Chechnya—many of them Arabs rather than ethnic Chechens—invaded Daghestan, Chechnya's eastern neighbor, in an attempt to set up a fundamentalist enclave. Meanwhile, the Saudis established a "Joint Committee for the Relief of Kosovo and Chechnya," ostensibly to raise money to aid the victims of war, actually to support Khattab's recruitment efforts in Chechen refugee camps. The title of the committee was interesting; the Kosovars refused to allow itinerant Arabs to fight in the Kosovo Liberation Army, prompting some to head instead to the Caucasus, where Wahhabi agents welcomed them. Yeltsin ordered the Russian army back into Chechnya, and the nightmare resumed.

The events that followed were written in blood in Russia and in headlines across the globe. In 2000, Putin replaced Yeltsin as president, and pledged an investigation of the human rights crisis in Chechnya. But a cycle of suicide terror that continues today had already begun in 1999. The year 2002 saw the death of Khattab, as well as the seizure of a theater in Moscow by terrorists draped in Arabic-script banners (the Chechens use the Latin alphabet). The terrorists and 100 hostages perished when the Russians gassed the building. Khattab's place as the leader of Wahhabism in the stricken land was taken up by the ethnic Chechen Shamil Basayev.

Another ethnic Chechen Wahhabi was murdered only last week. Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev died February 13 when his car was blown up in Qatar. Yandarbiyev, president of the Chechen republic in 1996-97, was best known for his involvement with the Taliban in Afghanistan, where he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

established an unauthorized Chechen embassy. As a result, he was repudiated by mainstream Chechen leaders, who had no use for the Taliban.

Russia expert Leon Aron, of the American Enterprise Institute, cites opinion polls showing that most Russians would like to see the Chechens granted as much freedom as possible, to get rid of the problem; Russian mothers are sick of seeing their sons go off to an unwinnable war. Most Chechens, meanwhile, want their republic to remain within the Russian Federation, since independence would be economically burdensome. Last year Chechens voted in a Moscow-sponsored referendum on autonomy within the Russian Federation. Although the Wahhabis threatened to kill anyone who participated in the balloting, the majority of Chechens accepted (albeit in a vote whose legitimacy some Western experts questioned) a constitution that renounces full independence.

In January, Ahmad Kadyrov, installed as Chechen president under the new constitution, made the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, and was welcomed to Saudi Arabia by Crown Prince Abdullah. This followed Abdullah's own visit to Moscow in September 2003, for the signing of an oil agreement, and may indicate that some powerful Saudis now want the wound of Chechnya bandaged, if not healed. Terrorism in Chechnya, after all, only helps al Qaeda.

The new Russian-Saudi embrace has been denounced by informed westerners as a gross example of cynical manipulation at the expense of the Chechens. Official Saudi support for the Chechen constitution may incite the Wahhabis on the ground there to even more vicious attacks, in protest against an alleged betrayal. But if the princes in Riyadh were to seriously repudiate the Chechen Wahhabis—cutting the financial lifeline, and making the activities of the Wahhabi meddlers illegal—they might do a great deal more than Putin or even any authentic Chechen leader to end the horror inflicted on Russians and Chechens alike. ♦

One Hundred Days of Arnold

Muscular governance in Sacramento.

BY BILL WHALEN

Sacramento

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER will celebrate his 100th day as California's governor in New York City, at a $50,000-a-plate dinner at the home of Robert Wood Johnson IV, owner of the New York Jets. The February 24 fundraiser for Schwarzenegger's California Recovery Plan (two propositions on the March 2 ballot to refinance the state debt and impose spending limits) has been roundly criticized by the press since it was learned that Team Arnold wanted Wall Street honchos to buy $500,000 tables of 10 for the event. Why the steep admission price? Schwarzenegger needs cash, and he needs it in a hurry. He's been spending $1.5 million a week on television ads that began in early February. His strategists figure it will take at least $10 million to sell a skeptical electorate on the merits of borrowing $15 billion to cover the state's deficit.

Does this mean the Sacramento press corps is ready to pillory Schwarzenegger as it did his predecessor, Gray Davis, as a money-obsessed pol willing to grant favors for donations? Hardly. Davis took more pleasure in fundraising than governing. Campaign donations were a source of affirmation for an insecure governor, which helps explain why he ended as Captain Queeg in last fall's recall mutiny. For Schwarzenegger, on the other hand, raising money is a means to an end—getting elected, settling the budget deficit—though it's something he does with Kennedyesque "vigah." Schwarzenegger raised $26 million for his recall campaign, and has six active campaign committees.

What's more, Schwarzenegger is still good copy for the Sacramento press corps. True, some columnists have griped that Schwarzenegger overuses the word "fantastic"—the tipping point coming when Arnold used that adjective to describe a court ruling that forced him to personally pay off a $4 million campaign loan rather than retire it through campaign donations. And they privately complain that the governor's press conferences are long on comedy and short on substance. Then again, anyone covering Schwarzenegger is caught in a tender trap: Even when the governor doesn't have much to say, the image alone is worth a thousand words.

This is not to suggest that Schwarzenegger's first 100 days have been gaffe-free. He took a hit for firing and then rehiring the state corrections system's inspector general. And he shot from the lip in offering to intervene in Southern California's grocery strike. That's a job for the federal Department of Labor, not a California governor—besides, Schwarzenegger might want to review Bill Clinton's swing-and-a-miss when he tried to settle the 1994 baseball strike.

Otherwise, though, the Governator's tenure has so far been as colorful and quirky as the man himself. Here's how his 100-day report card reads. On Day One, he signed an executive order overturning the tripling of the state's car tax. Sixteen days later, he repealed last year's much-maligned bill that granted drivers' licenses to illegal aliens. That was followed by a deal with the legislature to place the $15

Bill Whalen is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, where he follows California and national politics.

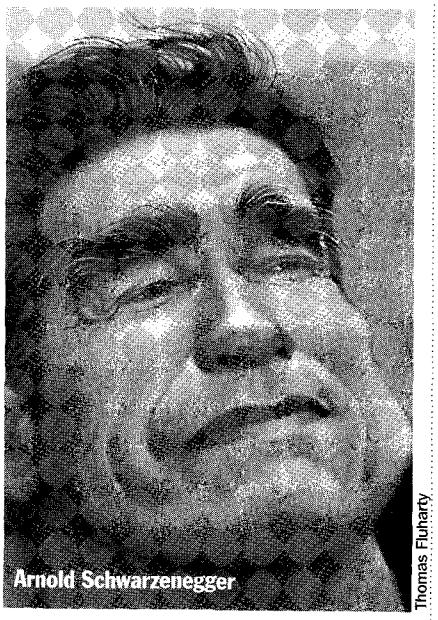
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

billion deficit-bond and spending limit on the ballot. His fourth big promise in last fall's recall election was to reform the state's out-of-control workers' compensation system. He challenged the legislature to send him such a measure by March 1, but that won't happen. And he gets an "incomplete" on a couple of other promises. He's still negotiating with Indian tribes on a gambling revenue-sharing agreement. And his "People's Reform Plan" to bar the governor and legislature from fundraising during the budget process is so far missing in action.

The key to Schwarzenegger's early success begins with personality. Gray Davis had few friends and a strained relation with the legislature; the Governator invites Republican and Democratic lawmakers downstairs to his first-floor office for photo-ops and souvenir cigars. Davis often locked himself in the governor's office and ate alone; Schwarzenegger frequently dines at the nearby Esquire Grill—walking through the front door and working the room. When he's not on the LifeCycle in his 12th-floor suite at the Hyatt, it's not unusual to see him working up a sweat at the Capital Athletic Club, a five-minute stroll from his office.

Schwarzenegger has proven to be much more of a Sacramento fixture than was anticipated. (He's reportedly eyeing an eight-bedroom mansion that, ironically, was intended to be the governor's residence when the Reagans ordered it built in the 1970s.) Why does he treat the new job as more than just another "location shoot"? Part of it is landing the job he's dreamed about for at least 15 years, since the first buzz about a run for office by "Conan the Republican." But there's more to it than that. Schwarzenegger's strength has always been that he recognizes his weaknesses. In movies, investing, and politics, he's made a habit of surrounding himself with more knowledgeable advisers. As a newly elected governor who's never held office and is unfamiliar with the nuances of state government, he needs to use his star power to forge relationships with lawmakers that he can leverage into bipartisan deals and progress. That means spending lots of quality time in Sacramento.

The California Recovery Plan—Propositions 57 and 58—is the first serious test of his political prowess. The campaign began in January; Schwarzenegger and his political mastermind, Mike Murphy, had planned for it since November, when it was obvious that any budget fix would require going back to the voters. Schwarzenegger began the effort facing long odds: Initial surveys showed


Arnold Schwarzenegger

Thomas Fluharty

Prop. 57's support lagging in the mid-30s, and doing particularly poorly among Democrats averse to supporting a Republican governor's idea. Team Arnold now claims support in the mid-40s.

Schwarzenegger's approach has been to chip away at opposition by courting prominent California Democrats as well as the left-leaning California Teachers Association. He also caught a break from a factor beyond his control: With John Kerry now the prohibitive favorite in the Democratic nominating race, California's primary has lost its luster. That means fewer Democrats turning out March 2, which improves Prop. 57's odds. Schwarzenegger's final card to play: He'll court voters as he did in the recall's closing days, barnstorming the state and saturating the airwaves.

It's an unusual approach to politics in these partisan times—defusing the opposition, relying on personal charm to sell the message. But is it sustainable?

Like most governors, Schwarzenegger has two spheres of advisers—one concerned with politics, the other with governance. His campaign sphere, run by Murphy, weighs long-term strategy and the merits of ballot fights. The governance side is led by chief of staff Patricia Clarey. Formerly a top aide to Pete Wilson, Clarey is Schwarzenegger's administrator, gatekeeper, and guide for how to navigate the legislature. Also influential is longtime confidante Bonnie Reiss, who serves as the governor's Democratic liaison and his eyes and ears on the State Board of Education.

It's Schwarzenegger's third sphere—his politico-celebrity partnership with California first lady Maria Shriver—that's hardest to decipher. It's probably her influence that explains some surprises, as when Schwarzenegger backed away from a more conservative spending cap, pulling legislators back into his office, and hammering out the compromise spending "limit" that's now on the ballot. In a similar vein, Schwarzenegger privately cut a deal with Gray Davis's old allies, the California Teachers Association. In exchange for the union's agreeing to a temporary spending cut, he reportedly agreed not to tinker with Proposition 98, the state's constitutional guarantee of generous education spending.

The big question, then, isn't so much whether he wins on March 2; it's whether he will continue trying to steer to the middle in the eight months leading up to the November general election. There are any number of issues where he's on a collision course with the Democratic-controlled legislature. These can be dealt with either behind closed doors in Sacramento, or out on the campaign trail in high-stakes initiative fights. They include:

Taxes: Schwarzenegger insists he will not raise taxes to balance next year's state budget. Conservative Republicans, led by State Sen. Tom

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

McClintock, claim that a 13.4 percent across-the-board cut in government services would make the state deficit-free by mid-2005. Liberal Democrats, meanwhile, put their trust in Republican history: Ronald Reagan raised taxes in 1967 and 1971, as did Pete Wilson in 1991, and they're pitching a temporary tax increase on individual Californians earning more than $136,000 a year.

Workers' Compensation: Schwarzenegger threatened the legislature with a November initiative if it didn't deliver on a reform bill. After the primary, he may seek to work out a compromise with the Democratic leadership. If so, watch for how he balances the desire to compromise with the pressure from his friends in California's business community, for whom workers' comp is a top priority.

Tort Reform: In litigation-happy California (one lawsuit filed for every 20 residents), the private sector desperately wants reform of Section 17200 of the state's Business and Professions Code, which allows lawsuits without proof of injury. If he goes the compromise route, Schwarzenegger will find himself in the middle of one of California's longest-running food fights between the state's Chamber of Commerce and the trial lawyers' lobby. If he chooses sides, the fight may be even fiercer.

Health Care: Last year's health care mandate on California businesses was supposed to face a referendum test this March. Now, it will be challenged by a November initiative. Seeking a deal on health care has the potential of steering Schwarzenegger towards potentially epic political battles over Medi-Cal reform and dealing with the 20 percent of California's population that's uninsured.

For now, the new governor's mischievous good humor is undimmed. In mid-January, he arranged for a power lunch at San Francisco's stylish Le Central brasserie with former Los Angeles mayor Richard Riordan (now the state's education secretary), former San Francisco mayor Willie Brown, San Francisco's new district attorney Kamala Harris, and *San Francisco Chronicle* editor Phil Bronstein. Harris, who once was romantically linked to Brown, is reportedly now involved with Bronstein, who was formerly married to Sharon Stone, who was Schwarzenegger's *Total Recall* costar. Leave it to Schwarzenegger to come up with a political remake of *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice*.

At one point during the lunch, Bronstein joked that Brown should write a column for his newspaper. Schwarzenegger pulled out a wad of cash and waved it under the former mayor's nose: "This is what gets Willie's heart going."

Who knows if Schwarzenegger will continue to find the humor in his new daily routine. But after 100 days on the job, one thing is clear: The Governator's still the one having all the laughs. ♦

Everyone Appeases China

France is just the latest.

BY ELLEN BORK

THE GENERAL SECRETARY of China's Communist party could not have expected a better reception if he'd been Charles de Gaulle liberating Paris. The Eiffel Tower was illuminated in red and a Chinese cultural parade made its way down the Champs Elysées in honor of Hu Jintao's visit to France. While there, Hu received a number of tributes, including President Jacques Chirac's denunciation of the elected leader of Taiwan and his pledge to torpedo the European Union's embargo on arms sales to China.

According to Chirac, "the embargo no longer makes any sense today. It's obviously not likely to change the strategic balance of power. It will be lifted, I hope, in the coming months." And in case Hu was daydreaming, "I repeat: France is very much in favor of this." So is much of Europe. Germany has long made noises about lifting the embargo. Sweden has weighed in. No one wants to be left behind. "If we were the only country to refuse lifting this embargo, it would lead to diplomatic problems . . . and would not be good for economic relations," said Dutch prime minister Jan Balkenende.

If the arms embargo is lifted—and a review is underway within the E.U. bureaucracy (requested, incidentally, days after President Bush himself rebuked Taiwan's president while giving the Chinese prime minister an Oval Office reception)—France will have led the way in removing the last significant European sanction imposed after the 1989 massacre of democracy demonstrators at Tiananmen Square. While it may be satisfying to criticize the French for craven pursuit of China's market, there is a bit more going on here, and potentially much more at stake if the embargo is lifted.

At the time the E.U. imposed its arms embargo, Paris was considered as tough as any capital. In the midst of celebrating the bicentennial of the French Revolution, France welcomed student and dissident refugees from the Chinese crackdown. Foreign minister Roland Dumas denounced the execution of three demonstrators

Ellen Bork, a deputy director of the Project for the New American Century, studied European policies toward Asia on a fellowship with the Transatlantic Center of the German Marshall Fund.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

weeks after the June 4 massacre, saying, "The totalitarian machine, in all its horror, is rolling. It turns what should be judicial decisions into veritable murders."

Within a few years, however, the French reversed themselves. In the early 1990s, Beijing punished Paris for selling jets and frigates to Taiwan, shutting down a French consulate in southern China, the center of China's economic boom, and exacting other commercial revenge. (In fact, Dumas himself opposed the Taiwan sales as an impediment to close relations with Beijing.) By 1994, France promised not to sell any more arms to Taiwan.

Next to go was the pledge to make human rights an issue in international forums. In 1997, France killed the common European position in support of a resolution on China at the annual meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva. Europeans routinely supported U.S. efforts at the commission, although these efforts were largely a booby prize contrived to mitigate President Clinton's about-face on conditioning China's most-favored-nation trade privileges on human rights improvements. With France leading the way, many other European countries followed. Denmark and the Netherlands soldiered on, only to pay the price in Chinese commercial and other retaliation, no doubt contributing to the current Dutch prime minister's wariness of being left isolated on the embargo.

President Chirac's motives, however, are not entirely mercenary. Paris's overtures to Beijing have as much to do with setting France up as a counterweight to the United States as with reaping commercial rewards. Also in 1997, Paris and Beijing signed the Joint French-Chinese Declaration for a Global Partnership. Chirac and Jiang Zemin agreed to "foster the march toward multipolarity"—a world, that is, not dominated by a single superpower—in which a "China in full growth and a united Europe will play an important role." He said he would "oppose any attempt at domination in international affairs."

Nor is France alone in its resentment of U.S. primacy. Over the past few years, a number of European politicians have expressed the need for the E.U. to "provide a balance to U.S. domination." Just after the Bush administration took office, the E.U. announced its intention to raise its "political and economic presence in Asia . . . to a level more commensurate with the growing global weight of an enlarged E.U." and then launched an effort on North Korea that was at odds with the United States.

Europe may not be able to supercede U.S. influence in Asia, which is rooted in a history of alliances, security commitments, and the presence of tens of thousands of American troops. Perhaps that is the problem. If Europeans believe their own arms sales, or political influence, insignificant, as Chirac's remarks suggested, they will fail to see any negative consequences from contributing to China's military build-up or weakening democratic states like Taiwan.

Europe can indeed complicate things. Ending its embargo would do more than just boost Europe's moribund defense industries. E.U. sales to China could advance China's military modernization at just the time when the Pentagon is predicting a shift in the balance of power in the Taiwan Strait in China's favor in 2005.

While France's romancing of Beijing is galling, Washington has itself partly to blame. It was President Clinton's flip-flop on MFN for China, explicitly delinking trade privileges and human rights, that consigned to the black hole of Geneva all efforts to influence China's performance on human rights. The Bush administration's own shift on China—which includes shabby treatment of Taiwan and neglect of China's human rights situation (Washington did not even try to pass a resolution critical of China at the Human Rights Commission last year)—makes it much harder to argue that Europe should not court Beijing. ♦

If you read us weekly, don't miss us daily.

www.weeklystandard.com

Where you can read both THE WEEKLY STANDARD and the Daily Standard

the weekly Standard

Subscribe • The Weekly Standard • The Daily Standard • Info • Search • Subscribers Only

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Right War for the Right Reasons

The liberation of Iraq was abundantly justified.

By Robert Kagan & William Kristol

With all the turmoil surrounding David Kay's comments on the failure to find stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons in Iraq, it is time to return to first principles, and to ask the question: Was it right to go to war?

Critics of the war, and of the Bush administration, have seized on the failure to find stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. But while his weapons were a key part of the case for removing Saddam, that case was always broader. Saddam's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction was inextricably intertwined with the nature of his tyrannical rule, his serial aggression, his defiance of international obligations, and his undeniable ties to a variety of terrorists, from Abu Nidal to al Qaeda (a topic we will not cover in detail here, rather referring readers to Stephen F. Hayes's reporting in this magazine over the past year). Together, this pattern of behavior made the removal of Saddam desirable and necessary, in the judgment of both the Clinton and Bush administrations. That judgment was and remains correct.

I

It is fashionable to sneer at the moral case for liberating an Iraqi people long brutalized by Saddam's rule. Critics insist mere oppression was not sufficient reason for war, and in any case that it was not Bush's reason. In fact, of course, it was one of Bush's reasons, and the moral and humanitarian purpose provided a compelling reason for a war to remove Saddam. It should certainly have been compelling to those (like us) who supported the war on Slobodan Milosevic a few years ago. In our view—and here we disagree with what Paul Wolfowitz said to *Vanity Fair* a few months ago—liberating the Iraqi people from Saddam's brutal, totalitarian dictatorship would by itself have been sufficient reason to remove Saddam.

Such a rationale is not "merely" moral. As is so often the case in international affairs, there was no separating the nature of Saddam's rule at home from the kinds of policies he conducted abroad. Saddam's regime terrorized his own people, but it also posed a threat to the region, and to us. The moral case for war was linked to strategic considerations related to the peace and security of the Middle East.

Saddam was not a "madman." He was a predator and an aggressor. He achieved through brute force total dominance at home, and it was through force and the threat of force that he sought dominance in his region, as well. He waged war against Iran throughout the 1980s. He invaded Kuwait in 1990. He spent tens of billions of dollars on weapons, both conventional and unconventional. His clear and unwavering ambition, an ambition nurtured and acted upon across three decades, was to dominate the Middle East, both economically and militarily, by attempting to acquire the lion's share of the region's oil and by intimidating or destroying anyone who stood in his way. This, too, was a sufficient reason to remove him from power.

The last time we restated the case for war in Iraq (in October 2003), we quoted extensively from a speech delivered by President Clinton in February 1998. This time we quote extensively from another speech, delivered ten months later, in December 1998, by President Clinton's national security adviser, Sandy Berger. Like President Clinton, Berger did a masterful job of laying out the case for removing Saddam Hussein. And Berger's argument extended beyond the issue of weapons.

Yes, Berger acknowledged, America's "most vital national interest in dealing with Iraq" was to "prevent Saddam from rebuilding his military capability, including weapons of mass destruction, and from using that arsenal to move against his neighbors or his own people." But the

Robert Kagan is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard. *William Kristol is editor of* The Weekly Standard.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

threat Saddam posed, by his "continued reign of terror inside Iraq and intimidation outside Iraq," was broader than that. The future course of the Middle East and the Arab world were at stake in Iraq.

"The future of Iraq," Berger argued, "will affect the way in which the Middle East and the Arab world in particular evolve in the next decade and beyond." Those peoples were engaged in a "struggle between two broad visions of the future." One vision was of "political pluralism" and "economic openness." The other vision fed on discontent and fear; it stood for "violent opposition to liberalizing forces." So long as Saddam remained "in power and in confrontation with the world," Berger argued, Iraq would remain "a source of potential conflict in the region," and perhaps more important, "a source of inspiration for those who equate violence with power and compromise with surrender."

In the end, Berger explained, containment of Saddam would not be enough. The "immediate military threat" might be held at bay for the moment. "But even a contained Saddam" was "harmful to stability and to positive change in the region." And in fact, containment was probably not "sustainable over the long run." It was "a costly policy, in economic and strategic terms." The pattern of the previous years—"Iraqi defiance, followed by force mobilization on our part, followed by Iraqi capitulation"—had left "the international community vulnerable to manipulation by Saddam." The longer the standoff continued, Berger warned, "the harder it will be to maintain" international support. Nor was there any question what Saddam would do if and when containment collapsed. "Saddam's history of aggression, and his recent record of deception and defiance, leave no doubt that he would resume his drive for regional domination if he had the chance. Year after year, in conflict after conflict, Saddam has proven that he seeks weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, in order to use them."

The danger was not that Iraq would present, in the current popular phrase, an "imminent" threat to the American homeland.

For this reason, Berger continued, the Clinton administration had concluded it would be necessary at some point to move beyond containment to regime change. At stake was "our ability to fight terror, avert regional conflict, promote peace, and protect the security of our friends and allies." Quoting President Clinton, Berger suggested "the best way to address the challenge Iraq poses is 'through a government in Baghdad—a new government—that is committed to represent and respect its people, not repress them; that is committed to peace in the region.'"

We made substantially the same argument in a January 1998 letter to President Clinton, a letter whose signatories included Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Armitage, and Robert Zoellick. In our letter, we argued that

> The policy of "containment" of Saddam Hussein has been steadily eroding over the past several months. As recent events have demonstrated, we can no longer depend on our partners in the Gulf War coalition to continue to uphold the sanctions or to punish Saddam when he blocks or evades U.N. inspections. Our ability to ensure that Saddam Hussein is not producing weapons of mass destruction, therefore, has substantially diminished. Even if full inspections were eventually to resume, which now seems highly unlikely, experience has shown that it is difficult if not impossible to monitor Iraq's chemical and biological weapons production. The lengthy period during which the inspectors will have been unable to enter many Iraqi facilities has made it even less likely that they will be able to uncover all of Saddam's secrets. As a result, in the not-too-distant future we will be unable to determine with any reasonable level of confidence whether Iraq does or does not possess such weapons.

That last prediction turned out to be better than we knew at the time. But we did note that uncertainty itself was a danger, because it meant that the United States would have difficulty knowing whether or how fast the risk from Saddam was increasing. The uncertainty of the situation would, we argued, "have a seriously destabilizing effect on the entire Middle East." It now appears that this uncertainty about Iraq's actual capabilities was perhaps what Saddam aimed to achieve.

II

So the threat of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction was related to the overall political and strategic threat his regime posed to the Middle East. Still, there is no question that Saddam's history with and interest in weapons of mass destruction made his threat distinctive. The danger was not, however, that Iraq would present a direct threat to the physical security of the United States or, in the current popular phrase, pose an "imminent" threat to the American homeland. Our chief concern in 1998, like Berger's, was the threat Saddam posed to regional security and stability, the maintenance of which was in large part the responsibility of the United States. If Saddam "does acquire the capability to deliver weapons of mass destruction," we argued, which eventually he was "almost certain to do if we continue along the present course," American troops in the region, American allies,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the stability of the Middle East, and the world's supply of oil would all be put at risk. The threat to the United States was that we would be compelled to defend our allies and our interests in circumstances made much more difficult and dangerous by Saddam's increasingly lethal arsenal.

That was why Saddam's weapons of mass destruction programs, both what we knew about them and what we did not know about them, gave the situation a special urgency. It was urgent in 1998, and it was urgent four years later. There was no doubt in 1998—and there is no doubt today, based on David Kay's findings—that Saddam was seeking both to pursue WMD programs and to conceal his efforts from U.N. weapons inspectors. After 1995, when the defection of Saddam Hussein's son-in-law and chief organizer of the weapons programs, Hussein Kamal, produced a wealth of new information about Iraqi weapons programs and stockpiles—information the Iraqis were forced to acknowledge was accurate—the U.N. weapons inspections process had become an elaborate cat-and-mouse game. As President Clinton recalled in his speech three years later, Kamal had "revealed that Iraq was continuing to conceal weapons and missiles and the capacity to build many more." The inspectors intensified their search. And they must have been having some success, for as they drew closer to uncovering what the Iraqis were hiding, Saddam grew less and less cooperative and began to block their access to certain facilities.

It was President Clinton who, in February 1998, posed the critical question: "What if Saddam fails to comply and we fail to act?"

Finally, there was the famous confrontation over the so-called "presidential palaces"—actually vast complexes of buildings and warehouses that Saddam simply declared off-limits to inspectors. Clinton intelligence officials observed the Iraqis moving equipment that could be used to manufacture weapons out of the range of video cameras that had been installed by U.N. inspectors. By the end of 1997, the *New York Times* reported, the U.N. inspection team could "no longer verify that Iraq is not making weapons of mass destruction" and specifically could not monitor "equipment that could grow seed stocks of biological agents in a matter of hours."

President Clinton declared in early 1998 that Saddam was clearly attempting "to protect whatever remains of his capacity to produce weapons of mass destruction, the missiles to deliver them, and the feed stocks necessary to produce them." The U.N. inspectors believed, Clinton continued, that "Iraq still has stockpiles of chemical and biological munitions . . . and the capacity to restart quickly its production program and build many, many more weapons." Meanwhile, a February 13, 1998, U.S. government White Paper on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction stated that "in the absence of UNSCOM inspectors, Iraq could restart limited mustard agent production within a few weeks, full-production of sarin within a few months, and pre-Gulf War production levels—including VX—within two or three years."

It was President Clinton who, in February 1998, posed the critical question: "What if [Saddam] fails to comply and we fail to act, or we take some ambiguous third route, which gives him yet more opportunities to develop this program of weapons of mass destruction. . . . Well, he will conclude that the international community has lost its will. He will then conclude that he can go right on and do more to rebuild an arsenal of devastating destruction. And some day, some way, I guarantee you he'll use this arsenal." "In the next century," Clinton predicted, "the community of nations may see more and more of the very kind of threat Iraq poses now—a rogue state with weapons of mass destruction, ready to use them or provide them to terrorists . . . who travel the world among us unnoticed."

Over the course of 1998, the U.N. inspections process collapsed. Attempts to break the stalemate with Saddam and allow the U.N. inspectors access to the prohibited sites came to naught. About a week after Berger gave his speech warning of the limitations of containment, the Clinton administration launched Operation Desert Fox, a four-day missile and bombing strike on Iraq aimed at destroying as much of Saddam's weapons capabilities as possible. Based on American intelligence, the Clinton administration targeted suspected weapons production facilities throughout Iraq. The Air Force and intelligence agencies believed the bombing had destroyed or degraded a number of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction facilities, but they never knew the extent of the damage, because, of course, there were no inspectors left to investigate.

Saddam expelled the U.N. inspectors in response to the attack, and they did not return until November 2002. As Clinton this past summer recalled, "We might have gotten it all; we might have gotten half of it; we might have gotten none of it. But we didn't know." Clinton went on to say about President Bush's actions in the fall of 2002, "So I thought it was prudent for the president to go to the U.N. and for the U.N. to say you got to let these inspectors in, and this time if you don't cooperate the penalty could be regime change, not just continued sanctions."

The situation as it stood at the beginning of 1999 was troubling to all concerned, and not just to American offi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cials. A report to the U.N. Security Council in January 1999 by Richard Butler, head of the U.N. weapons inspections team, warned that much was not known about the Iraqi program but that there was ample reason to believe a significant weapons of mass destruction program still existed in Iraq. Butler recounted a seven-year history of Iraqi deception and concealment of proscribed weapons and activities. During the first four years of inspections, Butler noted, the inspectors "had been very substantially misled by Iraq both in terms of its understanding of Iraq's proscribed weapons programs and the continuation of prohibited activities, even under the [U.N.'s] monitoring." Only the defection of Hussein Kamal had revealed that the inspectors had been wrong in their "positive conclusions on Iraq's compliance." But even after Kamal's defection, the Iraqis had continued to conceal programs and mislead the inspectors. The Iraqis were caught lying about whether they had ever put VX nerve agent in so-called "special warheads." Scientific examinations proved that they had.

The Iraqis were also caught lying about their biological weapons program. First they denied having one; then, when that falsehood was exposed, they denied weaponizing their biological weapons agents. Eventually they were forced to admit that they "had weaponized BW agents and deployed biological weapons for combat use." The U.N. inspectors reported that hundreds of shells filled with mustard agent had been declared "lost" by Iraq and remained unaccounted for. There were some 6,000 aerial bombs filled with chemical agent that were unaccounted for. There were also some "special warheads" with biological weapons agent unaccounted for. Butler's report concluded that, in addition, "it needs to be recognized that Iraq possesses an industrial capacity and knowledge base, through which biological warfare agents could be produced quickly and in volume, if the Government of Iraq decided to do so."

The inspectors left, and for the next four years, Saddam's activities were shrouded in darkness. After all, many prohibited Iraqi activities had escaped detection even while the inspectors were trying to monitor them. Without the inspectors, the task of keeping track of Saddam's programs was well-nigh impossible.

III

When the Bush administration came to office, therefore, it had no less reason to worry about Saddam's potential capabilities than the Clinton administration. And it had no more reason to believe that containment would be sustainable. In the early months of the administration, Bush officials began to contemplate some increased support for Iraqi opposition forces, pursuant to legislation passed overwhelmingly in 1998, which was supported by the Clinton administration. (The Iraq Liberation Act chronicled Saddam's use of chemical weapons and declared that Iraq "has persisted in a pattern of deception and concealment regarding the history of its weapons of mass destruction programs." It continued: "It should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime.") Meanwhile, Secretary of State Colin Powell was trying to prevent the collapse of the international sanctions regime and to staunch the hemorrhaging of consensus at the U.N. Security Council by instituting a more streamlined effort, the so-called "smart sanctions."

Then came the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. September 11 shocked the nation, and it shocked the president. Its effect was to make many both inside and outside the administration take a closer look at international threats, because it was clear that all of us had been too sanguine about such threats prior to September 11. Nor was it in the least surprising that the issue of Iraq arose immediately. True, neither candidate in the 2000 election had talked much about Iraq. But that was not because anyone believed it had ceased to be an urgent and growing problem. The Clinton administration didn't want to talk about it because it felt it had run out of options. The Bush campaign didn't talk about it because Bush was running a campaign, ironic in retrospect, which promised a less active, more restrained American role in the world. But that did not mean the Iraq issue had gone away, and after September 11, it returned to the fore. After all, we had a decade-long history of confrontation with Iraq, we were flying military missions in Iraqi air space, President Clinton had declared Saddam the greatest threat to our security in the 21st century, Clinton officials like Sandy Berger and Madeleine Albright had concluded that Saddam must eventually be removed, and U.N. weapons inspectors had written one alarming report after another about Saddam's current and potential weapons capabilities.

So the Bush administration concluded that it had to remove the Saddam Hussein regime once and for all, just as Clinton and Berger had suggested might someday be necessary. For all the reasons that Berger had outlined, Saddam's regime itself was the problem, above and beyond his weapons capabilities. It was an obstacle to progress in the Middle East and the Arab world. It was a threat to the Iraqi people and to Iraq's neighbors. But a big part of the threat involved Saddam's absolute determination to arm himself with both conventional and unconventional weapons.

September 11 had added new dimensions to the dan-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ger. For as Bush and many others argued, what if Saddam allowed his weapons capabilities to be shared with terrorists? What if, someday in the future, terrorists like those who crashed airplanes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon had nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons? Would they hesitate to use them? The possible nexus between terrorism and Iraq's weapons program made Iraq an even more urgent issue. Was this concern far-fetched? If so, it was exactly the same far-fetched concern that had preoccupied President Clinton in 1998, when he warned, in his speech on Iraq, about a "rogue state with weapons of mass destruction, ready to use them or provide them to terrorists," and when he had spoken of an "unholy axis" of international terrorists and outlaw states as one of the greatest threats Americans faced.

Nor was it surprising that as President Bush began to move toward war with Iraq in the fall and winter of 2002, he mustered substantial support among Democrats as well as Republicans. A majority of Democratic senators—including, of course, John Kerry and John Edwards—voted for the resolution authorizing the president to use force against Iraq. And why not? The Bush administration's approach to Iraq was fundamentally in keeping with that of the Clinton administration, except that after September 11, inaction seemed even less acceptable. The majority of the Democratic party foreign policy establishment supported the war, and not because they were misled by the Bush administration's rhetorical hype leading up to the war. (Its hype was appreciably less than that of Clinton secretary of defense William Cohen, who appeared on national television in late 1997 holding a bag of sugar and noting that the same amount of anthrax "would destroy at least half the population" of Washington, D.C. At a Pentagon press briefing on Iraq's WMD, Cohen also noted that if Saddam had "as much VX in storage as the U.N. suspects," he would "be able to kill every human being on the face of the planet.") Nor did they support the war because they were fundamentally misled by American intelligence about the nature and extent of Saddam's weapons programs. Most of what they and everyone else knew about those programs we had learned from the U.N. inspectors, not from U.S. intelligence.

IV

Some of that intelligence has now turned out to be wrong. Some of it has turned out to be right. And it is simply too soon to tell about the rest. The press has focused attention almost entirely on David Kay's assertion that there were no stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons when the United States and its allies invaded Iraq last March. We'll address that assertion in a moment. But what about the rest of Kay's testimony?

The key question for more than a decade, for both the Clinton and the Bush administrations, was not only what weapons Saddam had but what weapons he was trying to obtain, and how long it might be before containment failed and he was able to obtain them. The goal of American policy, and indeed of the U.N. Security Council over the course of the dozen years after the end of the Gulf War in 1991, was not primarily to find Saddam's existing stockpiles. That was subsidiary to the larger goal, which was to achieve Iraq's disarmament, including the elimination not only of existing prohibited weapons but of all such weapons programs, to ensure that Iraq would not possess weapons of mass destruction now or in the future. As Richard Butler and other weapons inspectors have argued, this task proved all but impossible once it became clear that Saddam was determined to acquire such weapons at some point. As Butler repeated time and again in his reports to the Security Council, the whole inspections regime was premised on Saddam's cooperation. But Saddam never cooperated, not in the 1990s and not in 2003.

It is important to recall that the primary purpose of Security Council Resolution 1441, passed on November 8, 2002, was not to discover whether Saddam had weapons and programs. There was little doubt that Saddam had them. The real question was whether he was ready to make a clean breast of everything and give up not only his forbidden weapons but also his efforts to acquire them once and for all. The purpose was to give Saddam "one final chance" to change his stripes, to offer full cooperation by revealing and dismantling all his programs and to forswear all such efforts in the future.

After all, what would be accomplished if Saddam turned over stockpiles and dismantled programs, only to restart them the minute the international community turned its back? Saddam might be slowed, but he would not be stopped. This was the logic that had led the Clinton administration to conclude that someday, somehow, the only answer to the problem would be Saddam's removal from power. Not surprisingly, the Bush administration was even more convinced that Saddam's removal was the only answer. That the administration went along with the inspections process embodied in Resolution 1441 was a concession to international and domestic pressure. No senior official, including Secretary Powell, believed there was any but the smallest chance Saddam would comply with the terms of Resolution 1441.

Resolution 1441 demanded that, within 30 days, Iraq provide "a currently accurate, full, and complete declaration of all aspects of its programs to develop chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and other delivery systems such as unmanned aerial vehicles and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dispersal systems designed for use on aircraft, including any holdings and precise locations of such weapons, components, sub-components, stocks of agents, and related material and equipment, the locations and work of its research, development and production facilities, as well as all other chemical, biological, and nuclear programs, including any which it claims are for purposes not related to weapon production or material." Administration officials doubted Saddam would do this. They hoped only that, once Saddam's noncompliance became clear, they would win unanimous support for war at the U.N. Security Council.

And it was pretty clear at the time that Saddam was not complying. In his May 30, 2003, report to the Security Council, Hans Blix reported that the declared stocks of anthrax and VX remained unaccounted for. And he elaborated: "Little progress was made in the solution of outstanding issues. . . . The long list of proscribed items unaccounted for and as such resulting in unresolved disarmament issues was not shortened either by the inspections or by Iraqi declarations and documentation."

Now, of course, we know that Saddam did not comply with Resolution 1441. That part of Kay's testimony has been widely ignored.

Now, of course, we know more definitively that Saddam did not comply with Resolution 1441. That is a part of Kay's testimony that has been widely ignored. What Kay discovered in the course of his eight-month-long investigation was that Iraq had failed to answer outstanding questions about its arsenal and programs. Indeed, it had continued to engage in an elaborate campaign of deception and concealment of weapons activities throughout the time when Hans Blix and the UNMOVIC inspectors were in the country, and right up until the day of the invasion, and beyond.

As Kay told the Senate Armed Services Committee last month, the Iraq Survey Group "discovered hundreds of cases, based on both documents, physical evidence and the testimony of Iraqis, of activities that were prohibited under the initial U.N. Resolution 687 and that should have been reported under 1441, with Iraqi testimony that not only did they not tell the U.N. about this, they were instructed not to do it and they hid material." Kay reported, "We have had a number of Iraqis who have come forward and said, 'We did not tell the U.N. about what we were hiding, nor would we have told the U.N.,'" because the risks were too great. And what were the Iraqis hiding? As Kay reports, "They maintained programs and activities, and they certainly had the intentions at a point to resume their programs. So there was a lot they wanted to hide because it showed what they were doing was illegal." As Kay reported last October, his survey team uncovered "dozens of WMD-related program activities and significant amounts of equipment that Iraq concealed from the U.N. during the inspections that began in late 2002." Specifically, Kay reported:

* A clandestine network of laboratories and safehouses within the Iraqi Intelligence Service that contained equipment suitable for research in the production of chemical and biological weapons. This kind of equipment was explicitly mentioned in Hans Blix's requests for information, but was instead concealed from Blix throughout his investigations.

* A prison laboratory complex, which may have been used in human testing of biological weapons agents. Iraqi officials working to prepare for U.N. inspections in 2002 and 2003 were explicitly ordered not to acknowledge the existence of the prison complex.

* So-called "reference strains" of biological organisms, which can be used to produce biological weapons. The strains were found in a scientist's home.

* New research on agents applicable to biological weapons, including Congo Crimean Hemorrhagic Fever, and continuing research on ricin and aflatoxin—all of which was, again, concealed from Hans Blix despite his specific request for any such information.

* Plans and advanced design work on new missiles with ranges up to at least 1,000 kilometers—well beyond the 150-kilometer limit imposed on Iraq by the U.N. Security Council. These missiles would have allowed Saddam to threaten targets from Ankara to Cairo.

Last month Kay also reported that Iraq "was in the early stages of renovating the [nuclear] program, building new buildings."

As Kay has testified repeatedly, Iraq was "in clear material violation of 1441." So if the world had known in February 2003 what Kay says we know now—that there were no large stockpiles of weapons, but that Iraq continued to pursue weapons of mass destruction programs and to deceive and conceal these efforts from the U.N. inspectors led by Blix during the time allocated by Resolution 1441—wouldn't there have been at least as much, and probably more, support for the war? For Saddam would have been in flagrant violation of yet another set of commitments to disarm. He would have demonstrated once again that he was unwilling to abandon these programs, that he was unwilling to avail himself of this "last chance" and disarm once and for all. Had the world discovered

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unambiguously in February 2003 that Saddam was cheating on its commitments in Resolution 1441, surely even the French would have found it difficult to block a U.N. resolution authorizing war. As Dominique de Villepin acknowledged in the contentious months before the war, "We all realize that success in the inspections presupposes that we get full and complete cooperation from Iraq." What if it were as clear then as it is now that Saddam was engaged in another round of deceit and concealment?

If Kay is right, Saddam had learned a lesson at some point in the 1990s, perhaps after the Kamal defection, perhaps before or after Operation Desert Fox in 1998. But it was not the lesson the United States or the rest of the world wanted him to learn. At some point, Saddam may have decided that instead of building up large stockpiles of weapons, the safer thing would be to advance his covert programs for producing weapons but wait until the pressure was off to produce the weapons themselves. By the time inspectors returned to Iraq in 2002, Saddam was ready to be a little more forthcoming, because he had rejiggered his program to withstand somewhat greater scrutiny. He had scaled back to a skeletal program, awaiting the moment when he could breathe life back into it. Nevertheless, even then he could not let the inspectors see everything. Undoubtedly he hoped that if he could get through that last round, he would be home free, eventually without sanctions or further inspections. We now know that in early 2003, Saddam assumed that the United States would once again launch a bombing campaign, but not a full scale invasion. So he figured he would survive, and, as Kay concluded, "They maintained programs and activities, and they certainly had the intentions at a point to resume their programs."

Was this a satisfactory outcome? If this much had been accomplished, if we had succeeded in getting Saddam to scale back his programs in the hope of eventually turning them on again, was that a reason not to go to war? Kay does not believe so. Nor do we. If the United States had pulled back last year, we would have placed ourselves in the trap that Berger had warned about five years earlier. We would have returned to the old pattern of "Iraqi defiance, followed by force mobilization on our part, followed by Iraqi capitulation," followed by a new round of Iraqi defiance—and the wearing down of both the international community and the United States.

There was an argument against going to war last year. But let's remember what that argument was. It had nothing to do with whether or not Saddam had weapons of mass destruction and WMD programs. Everyone from Howard Dean to the *New York Times* editorial board to Dominique de Villepin and Jacques Chirac assumed that he had both. Most of the arguments against the war concerned timing. The most frequent complaint was that Bush was rushing to war. Why not give Blix and his inspectors another three months or six months?

We now know, however, that giving Blix a few more months would not have made a difference. Last month Kay was asked what would have happened if Blix and his team had been allowed to continue their mission. Kay responded, "All I can say is that among an extensive body of Iraqi scientists who are talking to us, they have said: The U.N. interviewed us; we did not tell them the truth, we did not show them this equipment, we did not talk about these programs; we couldn't do it as long as Saddam was in power. I suspect regardless of how long they had stayed, that attitude would have been the same." Given the "terror regime of Saddam," Kay concluded, he and his team learned things after the war "that no U.N. inspector would have ever learned" while Saddam was still in power.

So it is very unlikely that, given another three months or six months, the Blix team would have come to any definitive conclusion one way or another. Nor, therefore, would there have been a much greater probability of winning a unanimous vote at the Security Council for war once those additional six months had passed. Whether the United States could have kept 200,000 troops on a permanent war footing in the Persian Gulf for another six months is even more doubtful.

V

Did the administration claim the Iraqi threat was imminent, in the sense that Iraq possessed weapons that were about to be used against the United States? That is the big charge leveled by the Bush administration's critics these days. It is rather surprising, given the certainty with which this charge is thrown around, how little the critics have in the way of quotations from administration officials to back it up. Saying that action is urgent is not the same thing as saying the threat is imminent. In fact, the president said the threat was not imminent, and that we had to act (urgently) before the threat became imminent. This was well understood. As Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle said on October 10, 2002, explaining his support for the legislation authorizing the president to go to war, "The threat posed by Saddam Hussein may not be imminent, but it is real, it is growing and it cannot be ignored."

One reason critics have been insisting that the administration claimed the threat from Iraq was imminent, we believe, is that it is fairly easy to prove that the danger to the United States was not imminent. But the central thesis of the antiwar argument as it was advanced before the war asserted that the threat from Iraq would not have been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

imminent even if Saddam had possessed every conceivable weapon in his arsenal. Remember, the vast majority of arguments against the war assumed that he did have these weapons. But those weapons, it was argued, did not pose an imminent threat to the nation because Saddam, like the Soviet Union, could be deterred. Indeed, the fact that he had the weapons, some argued, was all the more reason why the United States should not go to war. After all, it was argued, the likeliest scenario for Saddam's actually using the weapons he had was in the event of an American invasion. The current debate over "imminence" is an ex post facto attempt to relitigate the old argument over the war. The non-discovery of weapons stockpiles has not changed the contours of that debate.

VI

On *Meet the Press* on February 8, Tim Russert asked the president whether the war in Iraq was "a war of choice or a war of necessity." The president paused before responding, asking Russert to elaborate, as if unwilling to accept the dichotomy. He was right.

After all, fighting a "war of choice" sounds problematic. But how many of our wars have been, strictly speaking, wars of necessity? How often did the country face immediate peril and destruction unless war was launched? Was World War I a war of necessity? Was World War II before the attack on Pearl Harbor, or afterwards with respect to fighting Germany in Europe? Was the Spanish-American War a war of necessity? Was the Korean War? Never mind Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. And what about the first Gulf War? Many argued that Saddam could be (indeed, was) contained in Kuwait, and that he could eventually have been forced to retreat by economic sanctions.

In some sense all of these wars were wars of choice. But when viewed in the context of history and international circumstances, they were all based on judgments about the costs of inaction, the benefits of action, and on strategic calculations that action then would be far preferable to action later in less favorable circumstances. In other words, war was necessary to our national interest, if not absolutely necessary to the immediate protection of the homeland.

In this case, we believe that war would have come eventually because of the trajectory that Saddam was on—assuming the United States intended to continue to play its role as guarantor of peace and security in the Middle East. The question was whether it was safer to act sooner or later. The president argued, convincingly, that it was safer—it was necessary—to act sooner. Sanctions could not have been maintained; containment, already dubious, was far less persuasive after September 11; and so the war to remove Saddam was, in the broad strategic sense, in the sense relevant to serious international politics, necessary. This is of course a legitimate subject of debate—but it would be almost as much so even if large stockpiles of weapons had already been recovered.

VII

So what about those stockpiles? The failure to find them, and now David Kay's claim that they did not exist at the time of the invasion last year (a claim reported by an astonishing number of journalists as meaning they never existed at all), has led many to maintain that the entire war was fought on false pretenses. We have addressed that claim. But we also want to address Kay's assertion.

We are prepared to believe that the large stockpiles of anthrax, ricin, VX, and other biological and chemical weapons that once existed were at some point destroyed by the Iraqis. But we do not understand why Kay is so confident he knows what happened to those stockpiles, or to other parts of Saddam's weapons programs that have not been found.

According to Kay's testimony before the Senate (and since he has provided no written report and no documentation to support his recent claims, this is all anyone has to go on), Kay and his team "went after this not in the way of trying to find where the weapons are hidden." When the Survey Group did not find the weapons in "the obvious places," presumably meaning the places that had been identified by intelligence and other sources, Kay explains, he tried other means of discovering the truth. His principal method appears to have been interviews with scientists who would have known what was produced and where it might be stored, as well as a search through a portion of the documents uncovered after the war. Kay acknowledges that stockpiles may, in fact, still be hidden somewhere. But he does not believe they are.

Under questioning from the senators, however, Kay admitted a few areas of uncertainty. The first concerns his interviews with Iraqi scientists. On some occasions Kay has claimed that, with Saddam out of power, it could be assumed that scientists once fearful of telling the truth would now be willing to speak. Therefore, their testimony that no weapons stockpiles exist could be trusted. But when asked whether people involved in Iraqi weapons programs might now fear prosecution for war crimes, Kay said, "Absolutely. And a number of those in custody are worried about that greatly," which is "one reason they're not talking." So it turns out there are scientists who are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not talking. This produces, Kay suggests, "a level of unresolvable ambiguity" about Saddam's weapons programs. But is the ambiguity truly "unresolvable," or was it just unresolvable within the limited time of Kay's investigation? Is it possible that when all the scientists feel safe enough to talk, we may learn more?

The same question might be asked about the physical searches Kay did not conduct. When Kay delivered his interim report in October 2003, he noted that there were approximately 130 ammunition storage areas in Iraq, some of them spanning an area of about 50 square miles, and including some 600,000 tons of artillery shells, rockets, aviation bombs, and other ordnance. In the 1990s, U.N. inspectors learned that the Iraqi military stored chemical ordnance at the same ammunition depots where the conventional rounds were stored. As of October, only 10 of these ammunition depots had been searched by U.S. teams. Kay has not said how many were searched in the succeeding four months, but one suspects a great many still have not been examined. Surely this creates another level of ambiguity, which, in time, may be resolved.

Finally there is the question of Iraqi documents. We understand that thousands of pages of documents seized at the end of the war have still not been read. During the 1990s, U.N. inspectors frequently opened treasure troves of information simply with the discovery of a single document in a mountain of paper. Is it possible that some of the unread documents contain useful information? In addition, according to Kay's October report and his most recent testimony, Iraqi officials undertook a massive effort to destroy evidence, burning documents and destroying computer hard-drives. The result, Kay acknowledged, is that "we're really not going to be able to prove . . . some of the positive conclusions that we're going to come to." Yet another level of ambiguity.

The truth is, neither Kay nor anyone else knows what happened to the weapons stockpiles that we know Iraq once had—because the Iraqis admitted having them. Again, we are willing to be persuaded that Saddam had no weapons stockpiles last year when the war began. But it is too soon, we believe, to come firmly to that conclusion. Nor do we find particularly persuasive the argument that Saddam was only pretending to have weapons of mass destruction, or that he was delusional and being deceived by all around him. These hypotheses are possible. It is also possible we will find stockpiles of weapons, or evidence of their destruction or removal just before the war.

Kay, oddly, has himself suggested in one press interview that the stockpiles or some portion of them may have been transferred to Syria before the war. If that were true, then it would not be the case, *pace* Kay, that "we were all wrong." This past week, moreover, another U.S. government report concerning Iraq's weapons surfaced in the press. Although widely misreported as confirming Kay's claim regarding the stockpiles, in fact the report casts doubt on it. In December 2002, according to *USA Today*, a team of U.S. intelligence analysts predicted it would be extremely difficult to find weapons of mass destruction in the aftermath of an invasion. The study had "considered but rejected the possibility that Iraq had no banned weapons." But it predicted that "locating a program that . . . has been driven by denial and deception imperatives is no small task." Efforts to find the arms after the war would be like "trying to find multiple needles in a haystack . . . against the background of not knowing how many needles may have been hidden."

It remains possible that new evidence will be found. We understand why some now want to declare the search over. But we can hardly see how it benefits the people of the United States or the world to declare it over prematurely.

VIII

Whatever the results of that search, it will continue to be the case that the war was worth fighting, and that it was necessary. For the people of Iraq, the war put an end to three decades of terror and suffering. The mass graves uncovered since the end of the war are alone sufficient justification for it. Assuming the United States remains committed to helping establish a democratic government in Iraq, that will be a blessing both to the Iraqi people and to their neighbors. As for those neighbors, the threat of Saddam's aggression, which hung over the region for more than two decades, has finally been eliminated. The prospects for war in the region have been substantially diminished by our action.

It is also becoming clear that the battle of Iraq has been an important victory in the broader war in which we are engaged, a war against terror, against weapons proliferation, and for a new Middle East. Already, other terror-implicated regimes in the region that were developing weapons of mass destruction are feeling pressure, and some are beginning to move in the right direction. Libya has given up its weapons of mass destruction program. Iran has at least gestured toward opening its nuclear program to inspection. The clandestine international network organized by Pakistan's A.Q. Khan that has been so central to nuclear proliferation to rogue states has been exposed. From Iran to Saudi Arabia, liberal forces seem to have been encouraged. We are paying a real price in blood and treasure in Iraq. But we believe that it is already clear—as clear as such things get in the real world—that the price of the liberation of Iraq has been worth it. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Confessions of Al Sharpton

Running for president to escape the shadow of Jesse Jackson

By Matt Labash

I love to do my thing / Ha . . . and I don't need, no one else / Sometimes I feel so nice, good God / I jump back, I wanna kiss myself. —James Brown

Columbia, S.C.

While many reporters like to cover front-runner campaigns, I've always favored no-hopers. Losers are more vulnerable, accessible and desperate, meaning they reveal rather than conceal. Plus, it is always perverse fun to watch a man's id hit the end of its leash, just to see how far it snaps back.

That's how I found myself in South Carolina in early February, for what many were billing as Al Sharpton's Last Stand, or, to be more precise, his First Stand, since stand-wise, he hadn't made any. Sharpton runs on his own clock, the time zone of which remains a mystery to his revolving-door schedulers. "Rev," as his staffers call him, has missed a plane to a televised presidential debate, never showed up to a confab in which he was supposed to net some rare endorsements, and even kept the Dalai Lama cooling his heels. So at majority-black Dreher High School, where Sharpton is set to launch Black History Month, smart reporters observe what could be called the Hour Rule: At any scheduled Sharpton event, it is wise to show up 60 minutes late. Doing so gives you time to arrange your news-gathering utensils, to acclimate yourself, and perhaps to get a snack before Sharpton himself shows up 30 minutes later. With Sharpton true to form today, I have time to fall in with a group of 14-year-olds. They don't seem to mind Rev's tardiness, on account of its helping them blow through algebra and physical science, though if he costs them a third period, it would be lunch, and 14-year-olds have their limits.

As I talk to them, it becomes clear that, though they know he's running for president and he's famous, they have no idea why. They missed the Rev. Al Horror Show of the late '80s and early '90s: the Tawana Brawley hoax, the Crown Heights and Freddy's Fashion Mart violence which Sharpton egged on, the undignified appearances on the *Morton Downey Jr. Show*, such as the night when the once-tubby Sharpton, at the height of his shiny tracksuit and Cowardly Lion hair phase, was rolled off the stage like a bocci ball after a fistfight erupted with another guest.

But that was many makeovers ago. That was before he slimmed down in a Puerto Rican jail, protesting a U.S. Naval bombing range there. It was before his Senate and mayoral runs, where he played the spoiler, swinging votes away from New York Democrats who now give him the high hat. It was before he started getting tailored by the guy who outfits television lawyers on *The Practice*. It was before he started hijacking presidential debates, proving that even though he's stalled at single-digits in the polls, he is the only candidate who can turn a phrase. And most important, it was before Jesse Jackson, his onetime friend and mentor, was found to have been carrying some illegitimate fruit on his family tree and became increasingly irrelevant. Before, in other words, the media started taking applications for what Sharpton's kitchen-cabinet adviser Cornel West dismissively calls "HNIC—Head Negro In Charge."

When asked who Sharpton is, the kids seem stumped. One thinks he's a motivational speaker. Another thinks he "has something to do with the NAACP." A third ninth-grader offers, "He's a reverend, right? He's named 'Reverend Al.' Gotta be preaching somewhere." For most candidates, potential voters (or future voters, in the children's case) not knowing who you are is a disadvantage. For a Sharpton constituency, amnesia is one of the most desirable attributes. It allows the candidate to make a fresh start, which he needs even among this group. I assume, stereotypically, that these kids will be easy pickings for Sharpton. I couldn't be more wrong. An African-American teenager named Jerrod, wearing a "Dirty South" football jersey, says, "He needs to think about improving America as a whole instead of just one minority." A boy named Kamil seconds, "He's too strong, he's always attacking something."

"Truthfully," Jerrod says, "I don't think America is ready for a black president." Kamil takes it even further, "I

Matt Labash is a senior writer at The Weekly Standard.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

don't think black people are ready for a black president," he says, catching an elbow from the girl sitting next to him. As if on cue, Sharpton pads down the aisle, right on time, if we're going by his internal clock. He walks at least four inches taller than his allotted 5'7". He looks buttery-smooth in an elegantly draped three-button suit, garnished with a white linen pocket square so immaculately fluffed, it could've been laid in his breast pocket by God or Adam Clayton Powell, the latter of whom holds pretty-close-to-equal standing with the former in Sharpton's estimation.

It is apparent, rather quickly, that Sharpton's makeover isn't merely sartorial. Over the years, I've witnessed—many times—Sharpton bullying and race-baiting like any two-bit bullhorn hustler. But from the look of things, a leopard can change his shiny tracksuit. At times, it almost seems that if he had a high-pitched whine and unnaturally long fingers, he could be Alan Keyes instead of Al Sharpton. He tells the students that acting like a thug or some debauched gangster rapper is not a "black thing—the black thing is to reach high, no matter how low you are." He asserts that using racism as an excuse for not making progress—even when it's the culprit—is unacceptable. "If I step off this platform and knock you off your seat, that's on me," he says. "But if I come back next Friday, and you still on the flo', that's on you." Acting disengaged and uninterested in the world at large, he says, is a way to permanently hamstring yourself. "Most old bums start out as young bums," he says. "They cut school, they hung out . . . until one day they were gray-headed, no teeth in their mouth, and the young guy that everybody thought was cool was just an old bum on his way to old bumblehood." The kids titter, while Sharpton looks over at their principal. "That's a new word. Trust me. Write that down."

Standing before the kids as a successfully unsuccessful presidential candidate, he proudly says, "I decided I wasn't going to let anybody tell me what I could be. I encourage you to do the same." He preaches the transforming power of vanity: "Be the chairman of your own fan club. Every mornin', I get up, I have a meeting of the Al Sharpton fan club. I'm the president, secretary, treasurer, and sometimes, I'm the whole membership. But it doesn't matter. Because if I'm on my side, it doesn't matter who's against me."

Out in a foyer press conference afterwards, Tom Llamas, MSNBC's embed on the campaign, rifles one to Sharpton: NBC has him dropping to fifth place in South Carolina, a state in which it's generally believed he needs to finish at least third in order to prove he has any swat among black voters. "If I worried about an NBC poll," shoots back Sharpton, "I'd never get out of bed in the morning. They would poll that I'm going to sleep all day." Back inside, the students I'd been talking to, after standing up and cheering wildly during the speech, are now back to being dispassionate. "He proved my point," says Jerrod, "it was totally directed toward black people." A girl named Katherine tells me the speech was good, but "I'm already inspired by myself." When I snag a white kid walking by, 16-year-old Drew who dresses like an Abercrombie model, he is still smiling. The speech, he says, was "excellent—I was really inspired." Drew's is a sentiment that I encounter over and over again in South Carolina—often, and especially, among white voters—the gist of which goes: Al Sharpton, he's not that bad.

The nominal slug-line on Sharpton's homestretch traipse through South Carolina is the "Take a Stand Tour." The campaign, says Andre Johnson, Sharpton's press secretary, even has a theme song—Bob Marley's "Get Up, Stand Up," though in typical Sharpton campaign fashion, nobody thinks to play it at any of the stops. Someone—all right, me—gives it another name: the "Rev Gotta Eat Tour." The name is minted when, at a stop at Columbia's Benedict College, Sharpton is running his characteristic hour-and-a-half late. Llamas goes into the cafeteria and orders the last batch of chicken wings. They are cold, and when he gives them back to the cafeteria worker to heat up, Andre arrives. Andre then orders chicken wings for Sharpton, commandeering some of Llamas's. When Llamas protests, Andre offers no apologies: "Rev gotta eat," he says.

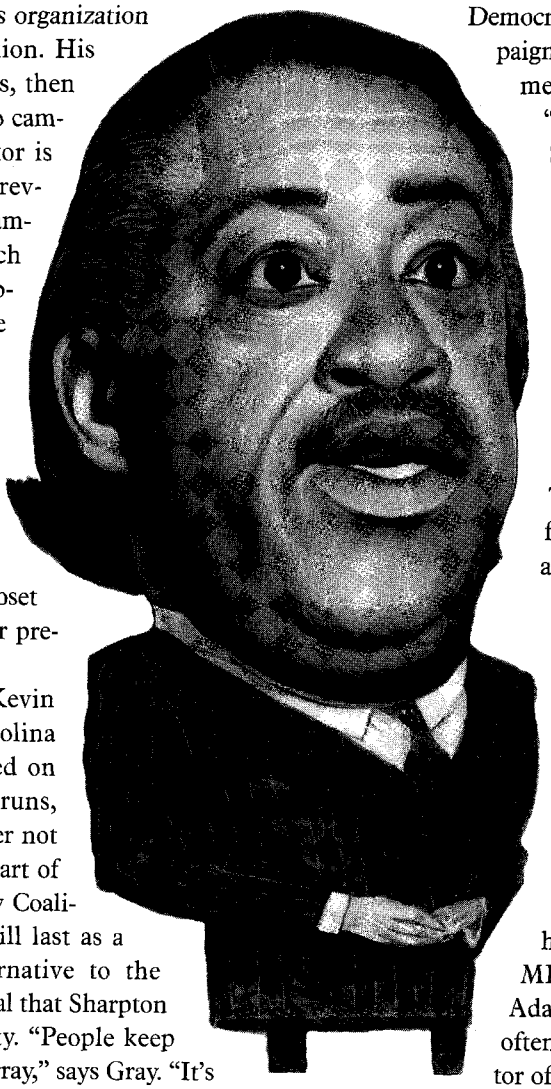
The phrase becomes a salutation, benediction, and all-purpose affirmation—as when Marines say "hooah." Whenever someone wonders where Sharpton is, another person responds with "Rev gotta eat." Some, instead of answering their cell phones with hello, switch to "Rev gotta eat." Others even consider the metaphysical implications of the phrase: "What appetite, exactly, is the Rev feeding when he gotta eat?" What does Sharpton want? On his campaign website, which regularly posts news from three weeks earlier, he lists his top ten reasons for running—none of which seems particularly compelling. Most of his issues—universal health care, for instance—are already being addressed by other candidates. Making sure support for affirmative action stays in the Democratic platform doesn't seem worth the trouble, since it was in the platform last time anyone read it, which few people do. And increasing "political consciousness" hardly seems worth gallivanting around the country for—even if you are staying in five-star hotels, as Sharpton tends to do—when, according to your last filing, you're carrying nearly $400,000 worth of debt with only $8,000 cash on hand.

Sharpton outlines a delegate strategy, knowing full well he's going to lose, but reasoning if he wrangles enough delegates in mostly urban areas, he will get—in keeping with the Rev Gotta Eat theme—"a seat at the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

table" during the convention and beyond. At the moment, he won't need a very big table. As of this writing, Sharpton has 12 delegates out of a potential 4,321. To compare that to Jesse Jackson's first 1984 presidential run—as Sharpton himself habitually does—Jackson won four states, the District of Columbia, and 465.5 delegates.

How Sharpton plans to get there—even though he does regularly out-perform his poll numbers—confounds many. In South Carolina, the only place he bothered with a ground game, his organization is more like a dis-organization. His staffers give wrong addresses, then ask reporters for directions to campaign stops. His field director is Deves Toon, a churchless reverend. I stop by the ragtag campaign headquarters, which sports one of the only Sharpton signs I see during the entire week ("Signs are expensive," says campaign manager Charles Halloran). When Toon is asked how Sharpton will do, he says, "How am I supposed to know—I ain't got no crystal ball," before he steps into a closet with the only other volunteer present for a "strategy session."



Local activist/writer Kevin Gray, Sharpton's South Carolina coordinator who also worked on Jackson's two presidential runs, left the campaign last fall after not getting paid. Sharpton says part of the goal is to start a Rainbow Coalition-style movement that will last as a permanent progressive alternative to the DLC, but Gray seems skeptical that Sharpton could organize a dinner party. "People keep saying the campaign's in disarray," says Gray. "It's not. To be in disarray, you have to be in array first. . . . He's running a publicity campaign. If you get these delegates, what are you gonna promote? Antiwar? Five out of the nine candidates were antiwar. Reparations? I doubt it. I like Al—he's a likable fella. But I just believe politics ought to have a focus beyond establishing who's the Head Negro in Charge."

When I submit to Gray that I find Sharpton to be more talented than Jackson in nearly every way—smarter, more likable, a better communicator—Gray, who's worked for both, says Sharpton's missing the most important attribute: "Campaign discipline—Jesse had it." (Indeed, in 1988, Jackson won 30 percent of the total vote and 1,218.5 delegates).

Roger Stone couldn't disagree more. An unofficial Sharpton adviser, Miami-based Stone is a Republican who cut his teeth working as a Nixon-era dirty trickster, and has been regarded as a controversialist ever since (Stone once found a steak knife sticking in his caricature at the Palm). In numerous recent articles, Stone has been accused of everything from aligning with Sharpton just to sabotage the Democratic primary, to actually keeping the campaign afloat with byzantine financial arrangements. Of the conspiracy charges, he says, "My name is Roger Stone, not Oliver Stone." And while some have suggested that Stone and Sharpton have one thing in common—they both hate the Democratic party—Stone says his motivation is much simpler. He likes Sharpton, finds him to be a "charming rogue," and besides, he says, "I like the game." While this is a believable explanation knowing Roger Stone (I first met him when he was masterminding the Donald Trump 2000 presidential campaign), his friends suggest that Stone cares as much about solidifying support in the black community in New York, where he frequently makes electoral trouble. When I ask Charles Halloran, Sharpton's campaign manager, what Stone's game is, he smiles and says, "If Roger found some ants in an anthill that he thought he could divide and get pissed off with each other, he'd be in his backyard right now with a magnifying glass."

Stone says people misunderstand his candidate's lineage. "Sharpton's not MLK, he's ACP," says Stone, referring to Adam Clayton Powell, the flamboyant and often hilariously abrasive congressman/pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church. "He's a showman, a performer. He does the big speech. He knocks everybody dead. He says what everyone is too timid to say." As for Sharpton's organizational deficiencies, Stone waves them off: "He *is* the organization." After the Michigan primary, in which Sharpton picks up seven delegates, Stone tells me, "The guy went into Detroit penniless, and he waged a one-man free media blitz. Between black radio and local cable, the guy dominated the news for four days—and it's all him, his performance. He's not a glad-hander. He's a rock star. Have you seen his church performance? It's electrifying."

Illustration by Earl Keleny

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On this count, Stone couldn't be more correct. Two days before the primary, we see Sharpton as everybody should see Sharpton at least once—working a black church on a Sunday morning. The day starts off with a slight disappointment. The first church he preaches is in Aiken—James Brown's hometown. A week earlier, Stone had suggested that the campaign was working on a cameo by "a certain hardest working man in show business." But then Brown was arrested and released for pushing his wife down and threatening to hit her with a chair. It was enough to keep him off the trail, even if Sharpton did bring along Brown's daughter and his former cook, who Sharpton says "makes the best banana pudding in South Carolina."

If Sharpton's life were a bad sitcom, which it sometimes is, it would be *My Two Dads*, with Jesse Jackson and James Brown, the Godfather of Soul, playing the fathers. They are his two poles, the bumpers between which he ricochets. Jesse, he tells me, raised him in "politics and civil rights," but James raised him "personally—manhood stuff—we could talk about everything from dating to saving money to adversity to real estate."

Sharpton made a name as a wonderboy preacher in Holiness churches from the age of 4 (in first grade, he actually signed his name "Reverend Al Sharpton"). After his real father split to have an affair with his half-sister, plunging the rest of his comfortably middle class family into poverty, and after Brown's real son was killed in a car accident, the two found each other. When Sharpton graduated from high school, he toured with Brown, his job literally being to hold the bag for Brown. Seeing as how Brown didn't like credit cards or checks, the bag was often filled with as much as $100,000 cash.

When I ask Sharpton to distill his preaching style, I expect him to mention preaching greats like C.L. Franklin (Aretha's father). Instead, he says he learned many of his techniques from Brown. "When you see a James Brown show, and I've seen about a million, he does this thing where he identifies somebody in the audience who's heartbroken and hurt, and he sings to them. . . . When he sings 'I Feel Good,' he thinks about somebody that didn't have no job—we've talked about that. When I preach, the reason I'm animated and dramatic is I try to identify with the people in the audience."

Having grown up in a tradition where church and community were indistinguishable, where a put-upon janitor could get a self-esteem jolt by becoming a deacon, Sharpton says, "People come to church, particularly in the black community—some of them are trying to get from one Sunday to the next. I don't give them some detached oration. I try to give them real hope, because I go back in my mind to when I needed somebody just to get me to the next Sunday. I learned from James how to identify with the guy in the audience, and say what he feels, and then bring him to where you want him to go."

Sharpton likes to joke on the stump that he's a natural to deal with a budget deficit since "I've been broke all my life. . . . I was born in a deficit." Indeed, he has been overcoming deficits his entire life—financial deficits, a credibility deficit, and currently, a vote deficit. As a friend of his tells me, "He continuously sabotages himself mostly because he's only capable of fighting off his back. He's an adrenaline junkie. He needs to live on the cusp of failure and humiliation or he can't fully function." This worldview seems to spill over into his preaching. On the Sunday I catch him, he prepares the crowd at Second Baptist Church in Aiken by first getting them good and hostile.

Slated to preach the 7:45 A.M. service, Sharpton doesn't show until nearly 9:30. After stalling with announcements and songs like "Ain't No Party Like a Holy Ghost Party," it's preaching time, so the unprepared host is actually forced to give an off-the-cuff 30-minute sermon until Sharpton arrives, which he takes out on Sharpton ("Al's coming when he's coming. Even though he's LATE! But when Jesus comes back—He ain't gonna be late!"). Sharpton finally arrives, and pads across the stage imperiously without offering an apology or an explanation. One can almost feel the room turning into John Edwards voters.

Sharpton takes the lectern and leads with an overtly political spiel, explaining that everybody says he's going to lose, but he has a little secret to share, "There are seven running, six of 'em gonna lose." ("C'mon Rev—c'mon now!" the crowd echoes back, turning his way.) It's their choice, he tells them: Vote for a winner who will ignore them, another loser who will gain them nothing, or vote for him, and earn some delegates who will sit at the table and make sometimes impolite conversation. For too long, he tells them, the Democratic party's been selling out the base to appeal to swing voters. "And you know if you married, you can go out swingin' all you want. Doesn't mean your wife gonna be there when you get back."

He builds to a sing-songish crescendo in which he relates how his abandoned mother was suspected of harboring a man in the house by a social worker, since they looked so well put together. He was mad, but his mom told him the woman was right, and here he falls into what the pros call the "whooping style," rasping: "I know a man / I know a ma-ANNN / He'll set you free / He'll make a way-AYYY." He then turns to the house reverend with apologies. "Oh," Sharpton says, "you preached already." The crowd is ecstatic. As common-man stump stories go, his takes John Edwards's tired son-of-a-millworker bit, spanks it, and sends it to bed without any supper.

But it's at the next church, behind a truck stop near

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Georgia line, that Sharpton proves judging his speaking ability from the presidential debates is akin to assessing Michael Jordan's athletic prowess from watching him play baseball. Half political, half religious, Sharpton takes as his text the Passover passage from Exodus. He starts slowly, turns it up to simmer, then builds to the Full Al, his throaty gurgle rising to a boil until it sounds like he's going to cook his own vocal chords. He grooves like some old-timey gravel-voiced gospel shouter, and by the time he relates how the Lord is "gonna let the death angel riiiiiide tonight," the crowd is ready to hoist the black flag and begin smiting Egyptians.

Notes-free, as always, he runs through a feverish 20-minute call-and-response, met with choruses of "Uhh-huhhs" and "Bring its." He shout-sings about everything from having decided to follow Jesus, to a saint being a sinner who falls down and gets back up, to his dad leaving him as a 10-year-old, to his bouts with government cheese in the long brown box, to his momma knowing a man who will make a way. "Do you know Him / Get on up." (Here you expect him to look over his shoulder and tell Maceo to take him to the bridge.) He shuffles from foot to foot like he's got a slight case of the trots, dips up and down like a firing piston, and caps it with two full rotations. He sticks the dismount, landing with his mouth perfectly squared in front of the mike, before dropping into a chair with I-can't-do-no-more resignation. The press corps—hardbitten types paid to hate things for a living—stand in gape-mouthed awe. "Did he just do a 360?" I ask CBS's Ben Ferguson in disbelief. "I think it was a 720," Ferguson replies. For today anyway, Sharpton is neither politician nor preacher. He's quite simply an artist.

Not every day can be as easy as Sunday morning, however. Two nights later, Sharpton makes his way into a dingy Sheraton ballroom studded with interlopers from a funeral directors' conference. He valiantly tries to portray his third-place finish—in which he got only 10 percent of the vote and, worse, only one-fifth of the black vote and no delegates—as some kind of resounding triumph. As he grabs a cell phone, I hear him telling a mutual friend, in logic too tortured to replicate here, "I think the real loser tonight is our friend Rev. Jackson."

Later, I ask him about this. He smiles devilishly, telling me I wasn't supposed to hear that. But then I remind him that the last time I interviewed him in his Harlem headquarters in 2000, he actually had a Jesse Jackson videotape cued and ready to show me. "No offense, Al," I say, "But do you think you might be obsessed?" He smiles, and asks, without sounding defensive, who a guy like him is supposed to use as a realistic gauge of success. "If I watch films of Jesse, you say I'm obsessed. If I was watching films of Doug Wilder, you'd say I was out of my mind." He compares it to Mike Tyson watching films of Muhammad Ali, and Ali watching films of Sugar Ray Robinson. "They study those who mastered their art before them."

Having known Jesse since he was a teenager (Jackson is 13 years Sharpton's senior, the same as MLK was to Jackson, Sharpton is fond of pointing out), Sharpton says you can't just say that their on-again, off-again relationship, which has fallen prey to rivalrous sniping and philosophical differences, is merely off-again—even though they currently don't speak.

"I grew up on him—it's more complex than that," says Sharpton. "I've outgrown it, I don't take it personal—but it does bother me." Sharpton, who's currently re-reading *Thunder In America*, a book about Jesse's 1984 campaign, says he's not quite certain Jackson even regards him as a peer. "I think in his psychology, I'll always be a 13-year-old protégé." The obsession, by the way, appears very mutual. Recent reports have both Sharpton's former campaign manager Frank Watkins (a longtime Jackson intimate) and Jesse Jackson Jr., who endorsed Howard Dean (Sharpton suspects with his old man's okay), gleefully circulating stories about Sharpton's involvement with Roger Stone.

Say this for Sharpton, he's more forthright than Jackson's ever been. When I suggest that his campaign is little more than an exercise in ego, he goes with it. "No one with a weak ego could run for president—cause you're ultimately telling people you can run the Western world, and that you're better than anybody else to do it. So for somebody to say it isn't an exercise in ego is like saying water isn't wet." Having said that, he adds, "Does the exercise help or hurt a given cause? I think the cause of civil rights, human rights, workers' rights is helped by my exercise in ego."

Jackson, these days, gets romanticized in comparisons to Sharpton. People seem to forget that despite all Jesse's relative success in 1988, it culminated in his founding a now moribund Rainbow Coalition, and receiving a plane to barnstorm the country for Michael Dukakis. A man can be forgiven for having loftier goals than barnstorming for Michael Dukakis. Jackson also attained something approaching insider status, though it is here Sharpton ricochets back to the other one of his two dads. He says the difference between where Jesse's gone and where he'll end up is the "James Brown factor." Brown, Sharpton says, "went everywhere, won every award. But he never became an insider in music. Cause he changed music from a 2/4 beat to a 1/3 beat. I want to change the party, not join the party. I have no problem going into areas they don't agree with. Because that's the Brown in me. James never joined the Motown sound, never joined the R&B sound. But 20 years later, rappers are imitating James. He became the inside, he didn't join the inside. He redefined what inside was." ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arab Democracy, American Ambivalence

Will Bush's rhetoric about transforming the Middle East be matched by American deeds?

BY TAMARA COFMAN WITTES

Over the past year, the goal of democratizing the Arab Middle East has been elevated from wooly-headed ideal to national security imperative and a key part of the war on terrorism. The Bush administration judged that political dysfunction and failing, corrupt autocracies were making Muslims, and particularly Arabs, especially vulnerable to the appeal of radical Islamist ideologies. America's longtime rationale for supporting Arab autocrats was their promise of stability. But as the president recognized in his landmark speech at the National Endowment for Democracy in November, the price was high and the stability was deceptive. Hence the new "generational commitment" to promote democracy in the Arab world.

In pursuit of this commitment (and other worthy goals), the administration has already taken one enormously large and costly action: It has launched regime change in Iraq, an endeavor on which the U.S. government has lavished considerable blood and treasure, and in which it cannot afford to fail (though fail it might).

It has also done smaller things—and promised in the loftiest rhetoric to do a great many more such things in the decades ahead—to spur democratic development across the entire Middle East. In what the president calls a "forward strategy of freedom," the administration has vowed to reorient U.S. diplomacy and U.S. aid so as to lend moral and material support to pro-democracy forces throughout the Arab world. Its instruments to this end include the Middle East Partnership Initiative, just over one year old; a Middle East Free Trade Area; and a proposed doubling of the budget of the National Endowment for Democracy, a bipartisan grant-giving organization funded by the U.S. government to support the growth of democracy. In addition, at a series of summits this year with the G-8, NATO, and the European Union, Washington reportedly plans to enlist other advanced democracies to endorse reform principles for the Greater Middle East.

Where does this ambitious venture stand at the end of its first year? It is too early, of course, to offer any verdict as to outcomes. But this is clear: For the endeavor to succeed, many within the U.S. government must overcome their own misgivings about it. Only then will Washington convince the Arab world's lonely liberals of the seriousness of its commitment to the goal of "a democratic peace—a peace founded upon the dignity and rights of every man and woman." What's more, given the complexity and scope of the endeavor, its announced centrality to our national security, and its inevitable consequences for our standing in the world, it is none too soon to clarify underlying assumptions, question priorities, and point out pitfalls.

Why, after all, should Arab democrats believe us? Both "anti-imperialist" Arab intellectuals and American analysts note the credibility gap we confront in preaching democracy to the Middle East. Acknowledging our past support for autocrats, as President Bush did in November, is a start. But actually overcoming the credibility gap and building an effective democratization program requires a firmness of purpose the Bush administration has thus far not displayed. Whether it can and will do this remains to be seen.

To be sure, the administration has taken an irrevocable step with the invasion of Iraq. Having committed many billions of dollars to the democratization program there, America must make its success our first priority. One obvious reason is that if democracy takes hold in Iraq, it really might provide a powerful demonstration effect to the neighborhood.

Less obvious is the fact that America's current prob-

Tamara Cofman Wittes is a research fellow in the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lems in Iraq—especially the insistence in Washington on a timetable and procedure for transferring sovereignty driven more by our own needs than Iraqis'—are right now providing a powerful *negative* demonstration effect to the neighborhood. The more repressive governments in the region are tightening their domestic controls, confident that we are distracted. Skeptical Arab commentators point out that American liberation has seemingly brought Iraqis nothing but chaos and death. Because President Bush linked the American democracy project in Iraq to reform in other Arab countries, the fate of democracy activists elsewhere in the Arab world now hangs on the success of the new Iraq. If the United States leaves Iraq's political reconstruction half-finished, Washington will have hung Arab democrats out to dry.

Some Arabs doubt President Bush's staying power on behalf of Iraqi democracy, but even more, they doubt that was ever his goal. This deeper skepticism is, sadly, justified by America's historical ambivalence about Arab democracy, an ambivalence that undermines even the new initiatives that are part of the forward strategy. America's error of "excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East," as the president put it, was compounded in 1992, when the U.S. government acquiesced in a military coup in Algeria designed to forestall a victory by the radical Islamic Salvation Front in the country's first free parliamentary elections. The "Algeria problem"—famously defined by veteran diplomat Edward Djerejian as "one man, one vote, one time"—still haunts American policymakers: the fear that free elections in the Arab world will bring to power Islamist governments that can claim democratic legitimacy but are anti-American and ultimately anti-democratic.

Add to this Washington's worry that assertive democracy-promotion in the Arab world will exacerbate tensions with Arab states whose cooperation on other issues is highly valued in the State Department and the Pentagon. The United States has little to lose by calling for a democratic transformation in states like Libya and Syria, but the Middle East is full of regimes America has worked closely with for years, and whose cooperation it desires on a variety of security and economic matters, not least the war on terrorism. In the past, the U.S. government has typically subordinated its concerns about governance and human rights to cooperation on defense, the Arab-Israeli peace process, and other core issues.

Because of these longstanding concerns, American democratization efforts in the Arab world have traditionally been modest, undertaken in consultation with the region's governments, and aimed at delivering technical assistance rather than altering the distribution of political power. Despite the new imperative driving the president's strategy, the policies devised to implement it so far—setting aside the unique case of Iraq—have not escaped these constraints.

In effect, the Bush administration has embraced the Arab regimes' own survival strategy of *controlled liberalization*. Most of the 22 Arab states themselves recognize their systemic failures, and seek to reform in ways that improve government and economic performance without changing the distribution of political power. While a few forward-leaning regimes have placed some power in the hands of their peoples through constitutional and electoral reforms, many others are trying to create just enough sense of forward motion and participation without power to alleviate the building public pressure for change at the top.

The premise underlying America's embrace of this gradual approach is that we can avoid the risk of Islamist victories and minimize bilateral tensions if we help existing governments reform, even if they resist opening up political competition and sharing power. In theory, our new assistance under the Middle East Partnership Initiative and the National Endowment for Democracy is also supposed to identify liberal forces within civil society, give them funding and training, and help them grow to the point where they can bring about velvet revolutions. This gradualist strategy assumes that, over time, liberalization will take on such momentum that the regimes will no longer be able to avoid devolution of power.

But that is an uncertain assumption: If existing regimes do lose control and chaos ensues, there is no guarantee that long-repressed liberals will win out. Indeed, the top-down "liberalization" underway in many Arab states has not relaxed state controls sufficiently to enable any third political force to organize, beyond the state and the Islamist opposition. The Islamists have the mosque as their forum for organizing, but freedom to organize outside the mosque—to talk politics and form parties—is still heavily restricted. So the regimes maintain control, and the Islamists remain the only alternative—as well as the excuse the regimes give Washington for deeming truly free politics too dangerous.

The larger the Algeria scenario looms in American policymakers' minds as the nightmare to be avoided at all costs, the more our policy is paralyzed; recalcitrant Arab leaders are quick to see this. But that's not the worst of it. The longer the U.S. government rewards regimes that "liberalize" without allowing new political forces to develop, the more the Islamists benefit from such limited political openings as exist. The more entrenched the Islamists become as *the* political alternative to the status quo, the more the language of Islamism becomes *the* language of protest politics, and other voices are marginal-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ized. As an Arab official told me recently, "The only institution expressing freedom [to criticize the government] in the Arab world today is the mosque. That's why they're popular." The net effect of gradual "liberalization," then, may be not to drain the swamp of extremism, but to expand it.

For liberalization to have real meaning, the regimes themselves must change. No matter how many small-bore grants the U.S. government gives to improve parliamentary effectiveness, judicial independence, or the rule of law, the legislature and judiciary in most Arab countries will remain subordinated to their executives—until those executives give up emergency laws and restrain security forces. And no matter how much training the National Endowment for Democracy sponsors for women candidates or liberal politicians, they will not be able to compete in the political marketplace until their governments allow freedom of expression and association.

America can constrain the power of Arab autocrats and help create space for the emergence of liberal alternatives only by putting political pressure on the regimes and, at the same time, developing partnerships with indigenous reformers both in and out of government. To succeed, America must dovetail its assistance with the needs of Arab activists on the ground. This requires American officials to get outside their embassies and cultivate Arab allies. It also requires U.S. assistance programs to abandon familiar but ineffective approaches such as relying on international "trainers" and placing our funds at the service of governments with a different agenda.

This hasn't happened yet. In its first fiscal year, the Middle East Partnership Initiative spent just under $28 million. Only about $2 million of it went directly to local Arab nongovernmental organizations to help them expand their work, all of it in less controversial areas such as family law, literacy, and anticorruption campaigns. This meager involvement of the nongovernmental sector is largely the result of the Americans' working within, and not pushing, the bounds set by Arab governments: Nongovernmental organizations are tightly controlled in most Arab countries, and in many they are barred from receiving foreign funding. As a result, roughly one-quarter of the money for political, educational, and economic reform is spent through Arab governments or on training for government officials.

What did the reform programs do? In the political area, they trained the newly elected members of Morocco's feeble parliament ($600,000); assisted the elections commission in Yemen's de facto one-party state ($325,000); convened a group of Arab judges, whose courts are plagued by corruption and government interference, to discuss "judicial procedure, independence, ethics, appointments, and training" ($1,425,000); and so on. Economic reform projects include funding the translation of government documents, under the rubric of helping Arab states join the World Trade Organization and negotiate free-trade agreements with the United States. Education programs include "English in a Box" for Jordanian and Moroccan teachers ($400,000), Internet connections for Yemeni high schools ($1.5 million), and a "child-centered education program" for North Africa and the Gulf ($1.1 million). None of these programs is intrinsically bad. But as catalysts for tangible political change, they don't stand a chance.

Yet even as American aid programs fail to challenge autocratic regimes from below by supporting local activists, the administration—despite the president's fine words—is failing to challenge the regimes from above. Yet surely the United States must press Arab regimes to reform their politics, not just their political process. The United States should press a consistent message in the region: that controlled "liberalization" that creates quasi-democratic institutions with no power is not democratization. Elections are important, of course, but as Algeria taught us, they are not the primary need. Even more basic are the protections that enable a variety of citizens and groups to speak and organize and operate effectively in politics: freedom of the press, freedom of association, the right to peaceably assemble, and the legalization of political parties and advocacy groups. Some or all of these are absent in most Arab states.

Forcing governments to withdraw their control over the public square and give power to participatory institutions is necessary if non-Islamist political forces are to organize, formulate agendas, and press their case against the state in competition with the Islamists. In Kuwait—where the emir loosened controls under American prodding after the Iraqi occupation of the country in 1991—a decade of freedom of expression, the abolition of state security courts, and the election of parliaments with meaningful oversight over executive policy-making have enabled the emergence of a liberal political movement, with representatives in parliament, as a real alternative to the Islamists and the monarchy. While the Islamists are still the principal opposition, the liberals are viable competitors in the political arena. Even more significant, liberals in Kuwait occasionally ally themselves with Islamists to argue for political freedoms, just as they ally themselves with liberal factions within the royal family to try to contain Islamist initiatives. This embryonic coalition politics is the first evidence that a healthy political pluralism can

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

develop in an Arab society and may be able to prevent liberalization from leading to "one man, one vote, one time." With these ingredients of democracy in place, it seems inevitable that those advocating the vote for women will soon succeed.

But in other states where political expression and the ability to organize are still severely restricted, non-Islamist social groups have a large gap to overcome before they can mount an effective challenge in the marketplace of ideas, much less in the political arena. In Saudi Arabia, for example, there is a group of intellectuals who are essentially liberal reformers. But since political parties and political meetings are outlawed and the press is controlled, they have no means of organizing themselves, no way of demonstrating their base of support within society, and no way to lobby the government beyond open letters to the crown prince.

The U.S. government must also do a better job of coordinating its assistance programs for civil society with its diplomatic agenda. To give one example, funds from the Middle East Partnership Initiative are currently flowing to Internews, an international nonprofit organization, to train journalists across the region—but this program is not accompanied by any noticeable pressure on regimes to relax their controls on the media. Saudi journalists are participating in the Internews program, but abstract discussions of journalistic independence are less relevant to their daily reality than the fact that several Saudi journalists lost their jobs or their columns last year after they questioned the influence of extremist clerics in politics and the exclusion of women from public life. When the United States fails to speak up for those who challenge the system, others have little incentive to try, and activists who would like to take President Bush's words seriously and look to America for support feel betrayed.

In order to build credibility with Arab democrats, American foreign policy must communicate to Arab governments that states that are actually changing the distribution of political power will enjoy better relations with the United States than those that talk about reform but fail to implement it. America has powerful carrots to offer. If we cared to work at devising targeted incentives for real reform we would discover a panoply of underused tools at our disposal. The president's proposal for a Middle East Free Trade Area, in particular, was conceived mainly as a means of integrating Arab economies into world markets and creating wealth, on the general assumption that economic liberalization over time encourages democracy. But opening trade negotiations could be made conditional on political progress. While the United States does not typically insert human rights clauses into trade agreements, it could certainly use trade talks with Arab nations to promote liberal change (notably in such areas as transparency and rule of law). What the United States must *not* do is direct even more money to Arab governments as a reward for limited reform. This, unfortunately, appears to be part of the "Helsinki" plan currently being discussed with the Europeans.

Finally, the United States must trust that shared interests with its Arab interlocutors will mediate the tensions that an effective democratization effort is bound to create. Many in the diplomatic establishment argue that a more aggressive approach to democratization will necessarily cost Arab cooperation with America's other regional goals. A broader perspective is essential.

America's relations with key states are grounded in a web of longstanding mutual interests and benefits. Such relationships can withstand tensions. Riyadh and Washington share interests in the strategic defense of the Gulf and stability in the price of oil, and they still would, even if the United States were to push Saudi Arabia harder on political reform. And in 2002, when Washington threatened to withhold additional aid to Egypt over the imprisonment of democracy activist (and dual U.S. citizen) Saad Eddin Ibrahim, it sent a strong message to the Egyptian government, and did no significant damage to bilateral relations. Although Ibrahim was released by a court ruling, local activists fear he received special treatment because of his dual nationality. The United States should make clear that its handling of his case is to be seen not as an outlier but as a precedent for U.S. policy toward our Arab friends.

If the administration means it when it calls Arab democracy necessary to American security, then we must build a policy to match and back it with political will. We cannot shrink from the tradeoffs required to achieve success, but must accept them and develop ways to manage both the costs for bilateral relations and the risks of undesired outcomes. It must be a policy that combines the assistance to indigenous liberals that the Middle East Partnership Initiative is supposed to provide but is not now structured to succeed at, with consistent, high-profile diplomatic and economic pressure and incentives to induce states to allow political freedom and to shift power away from the central executive.

America cannot promote democracy in the Arab world unless its strategy is credible. That requires staying the course in Iraq. Equally, it requires a carefully calibrated and robustly supported set of policies institutionalizing the forward strategy of freedom for the long haul. Otherwise, President Bush's powerful rhetoric on the universality of liberal values will prove to be a dead letter, and the cost to the United States, and to the peoples of the Arab world, will be immense. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Send Them A Message

The Weekly Standard makes it easy and cost-effective to reach key decision-makers in both parties.

During both the Democratic and Republican national conventions, we'll publish three special issues called The Daily Standard (as we've done before during these quadrennial affairs).

The Daily Standard will appear each day of the convention week: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Copies will be delivered —more than 15,000 in all—to delegates' hotel rooms and the main convention areas. We'll also distribute them at the exclusive events and parties held throughout both conventions.

The Daily Standard will feature the same wit and insight as The Weekly Standard, the capitol's most influential journal of opinion. Which means it will be read and passed around—a lot. Which means it will be the perfect medium for advertisers wanting to ensure a wide distribution of their message to the assembled delegates and party leaders.

The Weekly Standard offers one package of 10 insertions, including:

- A page in both "Special Convention Preview" issues of *The Weekly Standard;*
- One page in each of the three issues of *The Daily Standard* to be distributed at the Democratic and Republican Conventions, for a total of 6 pages;
- A page in both "Special Post-Convention Review" issues; and

Your advertising dollar has never gone farther. For one price, you can reach politically informed and active convention-goers in both parties.

So influence the politically influential.
Advertise in *The Daily Standard.*

Space reservations deadline: July 14, 2004
Artwork deadline: July 21, 2004

For further information, please call Peter Dunn, Nick Swezey or Kelly Lindner, at (202) 293-4900.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bettmann / CORBIS

German Jews in 1948 leaving to fight in Israel

Israel's Right to Fight

By Aitan Goelman

It is surely no coincidence that several recent books about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are explicitly styled "defenses" of the Jewish state's right to exist and right to defend itself against terrorism. More than three years after Yasser Arafat answered Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak's peace offer with a wave of violence, Israel has been returned to its pre-Oslo status as a pariah nation and the object of vituperative resolutions at the United Nations. European public opinion polls reveal that the Jewish state is seen as the most significant threat to world peace, and even in the United States there are those who regularly compare Israel to Nazi Germany.

It wasn't supposed to go like this. Since 1993, successive Israeli governments were encouraged by the international community to "take risks for peace." Despite early signals that Arafat had no intention of living up to Palestinian commitments, Israel signed a series of agreements ceding the Palestinians control of territory in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Then, at a summit with former President Clinton and Arafat in the summer of 2000, Barak made a breathtakingly expansive offer: In exchange for a Palestinian statement permanently ending the conflict, they would receive an independent state in all of Gaza and nearly all the West Bank—plus a divided Jerusalem, with Palestinian sovereignty over most of the old city, including the Temple Mount.

The Case for Israel
by Alan Dershowitz
John W. Wiley & Sons, 264 pp., $19.95

Right to Exist
A Moral Defense of Israel's Wars
by Yaacov Lozowick
Doubleday, 336 pp., $26

Support Any Friend
Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance
by Warren Bass
Oxford, 360 pp., $30

Middle East Illusions
Reflections on Justice and Nationhood
by Noam Chomsky
Rowman & Littlefield, 304 pp., $22.95

It was an offer that could have been made only after Israel's unilateral ideological disarmament of the 1990s, when children in Israeli public schools were assigned readings from the Palestinian nationalist poet Mahmoud Darwish, while Palestinian children were taught that Israel had stolen Palestinian land and would one day be liquidated. Arafat's refusal of the offer was shocking to Israeli supporters of the Oslo process, but they had one consolation: The world would recognize that the failure to reach an accord was Arafat's fault. And, for a short while, this was true. Clinton, forsaking diplomatic niceties, bluntly placed the blame for Camp David's failure on Arafat. Shortly thereafter, Arafat went on a tour of European capitals, where he was repeatedly informed that he was crazy for turning down Barak's offer. Even some Arab states, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, privately expressed disbelief at Arafat's failure to grasp the opportunity.

Then came the war, or as the Palestinians call it, the Al Aksa intifada. The death of a child, Mohammed al Dura, in a crossfire was captured by television cameras and became a symbol of Israeli brutality (although a German television crew subsequently concluded that

A former clerk to Israeli Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak, Aitan Goelman is a partner at Zuckerman Spader in Washington, D.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORBIS

he had probably been killed by the Palestinians). The criticism of Arafat for turning down Barak's offer vanished, replaced by international condemnation of "provocative" Israeli military responses.

Progressively larger waves of suicide terrorism targeting Israeli civilians led to the collapse of Barak's government and the landslide election of Ariel Sharon. Israel was forced to reoccupy much of the West Bank, a campaign that culminated in the battle for Jenin in April 2002. Jenin resulted in approximately fifty dead Palestinians and twenty-three dead Israeli soldiers. It also produced a cottage industry of anti-Israel propaganda, the most vicious of which (that Israeli troops massacred hundreds, or thousands, of unarmed Palestinian children, women, and men) has been disproved but not disbelieved. Almost four years after Camp David, Israel is widely blamed for clinging to an occupation that it was willing to end.

In *The Case for Israel*, Alan Dershowitz provides a defense brief for Israel, systematically answering a thirty-two-count "indictment" against the Jewish state filed by an imaginary prosecutor. Dershowitz does a good job of tracing the history of Palestinian rejectionism through proffered partition plans suggested by the 1937 Peel Commission, in the 1947 U.N. partition, and at the 2000 Camp David meeting, each of which would have established a Palestinian state.

Much of this is familiar ground, but Dershowitz is effective in tying the history to his argument. Each chapter addresses a common charge against Israel, including accusations that Israel is a racist state and that it practices genocide against the Palestinians. Dershowitz's thesis, however, is a simple one: Although Israel's record with regard to adherence to international law, human rights, and civil liberties is less than perfect, it is nevertheless very good overall, and "the gulf between Israel's actual record of compliance with the rule of law and its perceived record of compliance with the rule of law is greater than for any other nation in history."

Yaacov Lozowick's *Right to Exist: A Moral Defense of Israel's Wars* is also a brief for the defense. Lozowick, the director of archives at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust museum, is a longtime member of the Israeli peace movement. He was one of the demonstrators who saw Barak off at the airport in the summer of 2000, encouraging the prime minister to make dramatic concessions to Arafat in pursuit of peace. Yet Lozowick was so disillusioned by the Palestinian rejection of Barak's unprecedented offer and ensuing Palestinian violence that, in subsequent Israeli elections, he has voted for Ariel Sharon, long the bogeyman of the Israel peace camp.

Like Dershowitz, Lozowick mines the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and concludes convincingly that Israel's wars were generally wars of self-defense against an implacable foe. The Arabs living in what became Mandatory Palestine decided early to accept no Jewish presence, Lozowick writes, and they have never genuinely wavered in that commitment. Citing statements by both the Arab intelligentsia and participants in anti-Jewish riots, Lozowick dispels the notion that this violence reflects Arab resistance to perceived colonialization, noting that "the Palestinians rejected Jewish aspirations not because they were European colonialists and foreign invaders, but because they were familiar, second-class locals who had suddenly dared to overturn the natural order." If the Palestinian decision to fight a war whose only goal was the complete destruction of the Zionist project came early, so too did their preferred methods of waging this war—through "incitement, lies, and above all murder of the weak."

Lozowick contrasts the Palestinian predilection for targeting civilians with the tactics used by Israel during its wars, including the Al Aksa intifada. There are exceptions, such as the massacre of Palestinian villagers at Deir Yassin by an Israeli militia force in 1948, but these instances are so few and such a source of shame to Israel that, as Lozowick notes, every Israeli soldier is educated about them and taught that that they have a legal and moral obligation to disobey immoral orders.

Lozowick sees the same dynamic today: Palestinians attack defenseless civilians, and Israel responds by targeting armed terrorists. Although Israel's critics often note that the Palestinians have lost more than twice as many people as Israel in the current intifada, Lozowick notes that the overwhelming majority of Palestinian casualties are young men who themselves were involved in violence, while the clear majority of Israeli casualties are children, women, and old people, who were killed while eating meals or riding

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

buses. Lozowick concludes there is an "inherent moral imbalance" at the "heart of the conflict." While "no Jew ever walked into a Palestinian child's bedroom and intentionally killed her. Palestinian murderers have done so again and again."

Dershowitz's *The Case for Israel* is designed to sway liberals predisposed to side with Israel's enemies, while Lozowick's *Right to Exist* is aimed primarily at Jews and other supporters of Israel who are tempted to go wobbly in the face of relentlessly negative portrayals of Israel. Lozowick sees that belief in the legitimacy of the Zionist project has been a contributing factor to Israel's military victories (in addition to the certainty that defeat would mean genocide for Israel's Jews). He is thus concerned that this resolve is being weakened by an insidious international campaign of disinformation and delegitimation—worrying that "rational people will begin to doubt the truth of what they know."

Dershowitz has gone out of his way to market his book to left-leaning Americans, an effort that, in combination with some careless citations, has landed the author in trouble. While promoting *The Case for Israel* on the leftist radio network Pacifica Radio, Dershowitz was ambushed by Norman Finkelstein, a far-left critic of Israel who has compared Israel to the Nazis. Finkelstein's most serious accusation was an instance in which Dershowitz borrowed from a secondary source rather than the primary source he cited, and Finkelstein and other critics have seized on this to accuse Dershowitz of plagiarism. Dershowitz has been characteristically unapologetic about this, but the controversy illustrates Dershowitz's tendency to sacrifice carefulness for speed and productivity. (In his 2001 *Letters to a Young Lawyer*, he wrote proudly of his "many imperfect books.")

In fairness to Dershowitz, none of the criticisms from the Left have implicated the substance of his argument defending Israel. The reader can feel Dershowitz's bewilderment when he writes that he "cannot for the life of me understand why peace-loving people committed to equality and self-determination should favor the side that rejects all the values they hold dear and oppose the side that promotes these values."

CORBIS

This dynamic, however, should be familiar by now. It's the same worldview that caused some feminist groups in the West to oppose the United States' war against the Taliban despite its brutal repression of women. Both Dershowitz and Lozowick recognize the connection between distaste for the United States and antipathy toward Israel. Dershowitz notes that, while the gulf between Israel's record and its perceived record "is greater than for any other nation in history . . . for some America-bashers the United States may be a distant second to Israel." Lozowick goes deeper, tracing anti-Israel and anti-American sentiment to the deconstructionist intellectual conceit. The "fountainhead of the loss of truth," he writes, is Europe, "where it is intertwined in the major political undertaking of our era: the annulment of history in the name of peace."

If any single American epitomizes this view of the world, it is Noam Chomsky—the man whose writing stands as the fulcrum between the Left's anti-Israel sentiment and its anti-Americanism. Indeed, close association with the great imperialist hegemon stands as Israel's worst crime. Chomsky, a professor of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has long been an icon of the American far left. He is a persistent critic of American foreign policy, which he regards as straightforward imperialism under a thin veneer of hypocritical idealism.

But his attacks on Israel are truly vicious. Chomsky routinely compares Israel to Nazi Germany, and he has praised the "extensive historical research" performed by a French Holocaust denier, for whose book Chomsky contributed a foreword. His book *9/11*, in which he blamed American foreign policy for precipitating the terrorist attacks, was a bestseller, and he has now published a series of his speeches and essays dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, entitled *Middle East Illusions*.

In these speeches and essays, Chomsky constantly paints Israel as a neocolonialist occupier and serial abuser of human rights. His use of history is selective, blaming Israel for military action against civilians while omitting any reference to, or whitewashing, the long history of Palestinian atrocities. Thus, the Arab riots, which killed hundreds of unarmed, defenseless Jews between 1936 and 1939, become, in Chomsky's parlance, "the complex internal strife in Palestine."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORBIS

Israel is by no means the only victim of Chomsky's bizarre descriptions of world affairs. In a June 1997 speech in Israel, Chomsky claimed that Taiwan, Britain, and "Argentine neo-Nazis," along with Israel and others, were part of an "international terror network" funded by Saudi Arabia. According to Chomsky, Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon was precipitated by its fear of Palestinian moderation, while the United States' greatest fear after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990 was that Saddam would withdraw before America had an opportunity to oust him by force.

Middle East Illusions makes clear that Chomsky is most repelled by Israel's closeness with the United States. The villains in Chomsky's world are exclusively those who share American values or interests. In a region which has seen more than its share of brutal dictators and fascist tyrants, Chomsky abhors only those countries that do not hate the United States: Israel, Turkey, the Shah's Iran. He condemns Saddam Hussein, but only to deplore American support for Saddam before 1990. Chomsky can carry this double standard to truly hilarious proportions. While the pro-American government in Iran before 1979 is portrayed as an evil imperialist tool of violence and terror, the strongest words that Chomsky can summon to describe the terror-exporting Islamofascism that replaced the Shah is "independent nationalism." Meanwhile, Chomsky alleges that "the United States itself... ranks high on the scale of 'fundamental religious zealotry.'"

One interesting aspect of *Middle East Illusions* is that it allows the reader to discern the evolution of Chomsky's thought over the last three decades. The ten speeches and essays in the book can roughly be divided into two chronological blocks: those Chomsky wrote in the period shortly after the 1967 war and those Chomsky has written in the last six years. The difference is startling. In the earlier block, although Chomsky is critical of particular Israeli policies, he betrays vestiges of respect, even affection, for portions of Israeli society, particularly the institution of the kibbutz, Israel's communal farms. Considering Chomsky's social and political milieu, this is not surprising. As Warren Bass writes in *Support Any Friend*, his informative new book on the Kennedy administration's Middle East policy, in the early 1960s, "progressive, democratic Israel was still widely popular in liberal circles," and some of this affection survived even the death of Israel's underdog status in the 1967 war.

Such relative balance is entirely absent from Chomsky's late speeches, which are laced with anti-Israeli vitriol. What is behind this change in both tone and substance? After all, according to Chomsky's views now, Israel in 1973 was every bit as guilty as Israel is today. What has changed is that Israel is a closer ally of the United States than it was just after the Six Day War. As Bass points out, Israel could fairly be termed an American "ally" by the end of Kennedy's administration. By the end of Johnson's, the Arabs and Israelis had chosen their respective sides in the Cold War. But Israel and the United States were not *close* allies then, as they are now.

In his earlier essays Chomsky could blame misguided Israeli submission to an insidious American agenda for many of Israel's mistakes. By the late 1990s, he could no longer hold out much hope that Israel would spurn its most important (nearly its only) benefactor, supplier, and ally. Israel and the United States are international partners in crime. In March 2001, Chomsky lambasted Israel as an American "outpost" with economic arrangements "that look pretty much like the United States itself," and he noted that "Israel itself" was "becoming very much like the United States." In Chomsky's mind, this is the worst thing that can be said about a country.

These days, nearly everyone (except groups like Hamas) believes in the two-state solution; Ariel Sharon has endorsed the creation of a Palestinian state. Moreover, there is, as Dershowitz observes, a broad international consensus on what this solution would look like.

It looks pretty much like Barak's plan at Camp David: Israel relinquishes Gaza and all the West Bank except concentrated groups of settlements, for which the Palestinians are "swapped" areas of southern Israel. Some Israeli settlements are evacuated, and Jerusalem is divided, with Israel keeping "Jewish" West Jerusalem and the Palestinians taking "Arab" East Jerusalem. Israel keeps the Western Wall and adjacent plaza area. A small number of Palestinian refugees are allowed to settle in Israel, while the rest are offered monetary compensation. Peace, or something approximating peace, reigns between democratic Israel and independent Palestine.

The conventional wisdom, then, is that a peaceful solution that satisfies the minimal requirement of both sides is possible, and that its broad contours are already widely known. It is this conviction that drives the Israeli doves, and it is this stubborn dogma that causes people of good will to close their eyes to unpleasant facts at odds with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this preexisting belief. As Lozowick writes, "what if the Palestinians intended to achieve their goals at a price beyond anything Israel could ever afford to pay? This possibility, and the many indications that it must be taken seriously, could not be acknowledged by most of the political Left between 1993 and October 2000. Some have yet to do so." Or, as Dershowitz observes, a recent poll of Palestinians revealed that 87 percent favor "liberating" all of Israel.

The extent of Palestinian territorial ambition almost ensures that Israel's granting of a Palestinian state will not buy peace. The conflict between Israel and the state of Palestine would be unlikely, at least in the short term, to be all-out armed conflict. It may start with a third intifada, this one blamed on the humiliation of Israel's economic domination of a less-developed Palestine or on the provocation that some religious Jews continue to pray at the retaining wall of Haram al Sharif. (This is not far-fetched when we remember the mufti of Jerusalem has issued a fatwa declaring that "no stone of the Western Wall has any connection to Hebrew history"—a falsehood of which Arafat tried to persuade Clinton at Camp David.)

The law-enforcement officials of the new state of Palestine will do little to prevent or punish attacks on Jewish civilians. Will the international community blame Palestine for the renewed violence? If the past is any guide, the odds are not good. The Oslo Accords committed the Palestinian Authority to fight terror and extradite terrorist suspects to Israel, but in all the years of terrorism since Oslo, the Palestinians have extradited no one.

The real question would thus be what Israel will do in response to renewed Palestinian attacks. The degree of Israeli resolve in the face of the current intifada has surprised some Palestinians, who interpreted Israel's unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon in early 2000 as evidence of Israeli softness. Materialistic, post-Zionist Israel, it was believed, cared only about the price of its tech stocks on NASDAQ—and had no stomach to fight a protracted guerrilla war.

It's not clear Israeli resolve would have long survived the concessions contemplated at Camp David. As Lozowick observes, one reason Israel won its wars is that the Israeli population overwhelmingly believed in the right of the Jewish people to sovereignty in their ancestral homeland. The historic center of Jewish nationhood is not Tel Aviv, Netanya, or Haifa. It is Jerusalem—and not the modern neighborhoods of West Jerusalem, which Israel would keep under the Clinton plans. In fact, it's not even merely the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City. The historical seat of Jewish nationhood is the Temple Mount. Abdication of that tiny piece of real estate is not compromise. It is surrender.

Getty Images / Stone

There is thus good reason to conclude, as Lozowick does, that no potential solution to the conflict satisfies the current minimum demands of either side. Both Lozowick and Dershowitz acknowledge the unlikelihood of achieving true peace anytime soon. Dershowitz blandly concludes that "the best hope for peace is that time and progress" will persuade the Palestinians to abandon their goal of destroying the Jewish state. Lozowick is less sanguine, as he predicts that Israel may have to weather at least another century of violent opposition before the Muslim world will conclude that the Jews have come back to the Middle East to stay. It is impossible to read Lozowick's book and conclude that his prediction is irrationally pessimistic. At the very least, the hope that peace is imminent or within reach seems dangerously naive.

Seen in this light, a long-term American policy of benign neglect and conflict management might be best for the Israelis and Palestinians. There is certainly precedent for this. As Bass notes, Kennedy "seems to have been immune to any sweeping temptations . . . to try to wrap up the entire Arab-Israeli conflict." In the Middle East, "modest steps to address manageable problems, rather than bold leaps toward a comprehensive solution" generally have the best chance of success."

Israel's simple act of building a security fence between Palestinian and Israeli population centers is a good example of the necessary kind of pragmatic, imperfect steps toward peace. The existence of such a fence around the Gaza Strip has meant that not one of the hundreds of Palestinian suicide bombers in Israel has come from Gaza. Already, the unfinished fence in the West Bank has made it harder for would-be martyrs to reach major Jewish population centers.

Of course, as Lozowick, Dershowitz, and even many in Israel's Likud party concede, this does not mean that Israel can preserve its democratic and Jewish character while maintaining control over several million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel will have to figure out a way to divest itself of control over many of these people. But it may be an illusion that this will bring a quick and easy peace. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

All pictures: Thames & Hudson.

The Duchess of Alba (1797)

Art of Darkness

The extraordinary work of Francisco Goya.

BY THOMAS M. DISCH

By the kind of cruel coincidence that more commonly afflicts TV docudramas based on the latest celebrity murderer, two biographies of Goya have just appeared in bookstores, each a page-turner by an established popular writer, each more or less idolatrous in its reverence for Goya, each hastily assembled from the same rather slender stock of two-century-old gossip. The first is *Goya* by the Australian critic Robert Hughes, and the second is *Francisco Goya* by the American novelist Evan S. Connell.

Goya
by Robert Hughes
Knopf, 480 pp., $40

Francisco Goya
A Life
by Evan S. Connell
Counterpoint, 272 pp., $26

Goya
by Werner Hofmann
Thames & Hudson, 344 pp., $75

Had Goya spent his career in any country but Spain, we would probably know a good deal more about him than we do. Spain in Goya's time—he was born in 1746 and died in 1828—was as scary as any horror movie. The Bourbon monarchy, Goya's primary employer, was as grotesque a clan as the Munsters; the Inquisition was still an active force; the six-year-long Peninsular War against Napoleon was at least as unremittingly cruel as the Spanish Civil War of the next century; and the economy was in steady decline as Spain's American colonies defected one by one. Such circumstances are not conducive to biography. Prudent men did not keep diaries and had no pen pals.

In any case, painters are notoriously unforthcoming, if not simply mum. This makes them excellent subjects for the kind of novelistic biographer who has no compunction about inferring whole romances from a dropped handkerchief. Michelangelo, Van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec, Pollock—all have been given the full Hollywood treatment. Even Goya has already had two operas to his credit, to say nothing of a pair of Hollywood biopics, the earlier of which, the 1959 *The Naked Maja*, starred Ava Gardner as Doña Maria Teresa Cayetana de Silva, thirteenth Duchess of Alba, with whom Goya is reputed to have had a passionate affair.

Hughes and Connell differ on whether Goya's mad passion was reciprocated or consummated (not necessarily the same thing with the thirteenth duchess). If so, it would have been highly inappropriate. She was in the first, brief flower of her twenties; he, well into middle age and already deaf. She was the richest woman in Spain, not excepting the queen; he, by virtue of his skill for painting the clothing of the rich, was the best regarded painter, which is to say, a servant of low stature. That he was married doesn't enter into it. Goya's wife was only there for breeding purposes. She was continually pregnant; some miscarried, the moiety of the rest died in infancy. He never painted her.

Hughes and Connell's books will not cause readers to develop warm feelings for Goya, though the circumstances of his life are always of interest. Of the two accounts, Connell's zooms in on Goya and out to the dioramas of history with more artistry and at a quicker pace. Hughes spends far too much time describing the paintings in potted art-history lectures, paintings

The poet and novelist Thomas M. Disch is a frequent reviewer of art for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one must squint at in his book's exigent reproductions. Better a full-scale coffee-table tome—Werner Hofmann's *Goya* with its gorgeous reproductions—or no pictures at all. Hughes can also register as tendentious, as when he speculates that Warhol would have been a willing servant of the Nazis (this, by way of defending Goya against charges of collaborating with Napoleon's puppet regime) or when, egregiously, he boasts how well *he* would have scored with the Duchess of Alba, given the same chance Goya had.

That boast can be read, however, as an appreciation of Goya's achievement in the department of art devoted to female anatomy, and that is certainly a central concern. By both Hughes and Connell's accounts, Goya's chief (and almost sole) merit as a painter lies in his treatment of the human figure. There are few significant landscapes from his hands, no still-lifes, and even in the matter of the figures he produces few memorable pictures of religious or mythological scenes, which were the pinnacle of painterly ambition in his day. He did portraits, more often than not of people history has shown to be dimwits and venal time-servers, portraits that were valued by their sitters for their rendering of laces, metal buttons, and watered silk. Add to this a number of festive scenes of bucolic life executed as cartoons for the tapestry factory that Goya ran for the Crown, and that was his financial mainstay for much of his life.

Neither of these enterprises accounts for the adulation Goya has enjoyed posthumously. The work for which he is most admired nowadays are aquatints, not oil paintings, and were seen by none or very few of his contemporaries: the *Caprichos* of 1796-97 and his graphic account of the Peninsular War, *Los Desastres*, posthumously published in 1863. Like Daumier or his contemporary and soul-mate, William Blake, Goya expressed his own feelings more readily with the pen and the etching needle than the brush, especially when those feelings were scorn, indignation, fear, disgust, and sheer horror. All by himself, in the darkest corner of Europe, surrounded by tyrants, imbeciles, brigands, and hags, Goya was a one-man Gothic Revival. For the Gothicists elsewhere in Europe, Spain was the heart of darkness. It was, as well, for Goya, but he lived there.

That's what gives him a special authority on the subject of Hell, which is the theme of his final and most problematical group of paintings, known as the "Black Paintings" of the "Quinta del Sordo," or the Deaf Man's House. These are Gothic showstoppers: *Saturn Devouring His Son*, *Witches' Sabbath*,

The Family of Charles IV *(1800)*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Above: The Naked Maja *(c. 1798). Below:* The Dream of Reason Produces Monsters *(1797).*

the haunting *Head of a Dog*, and more: some dozen pictures that were discovered as murals on the walls of Goya's country retreat, which eventually found their way to the Prado.

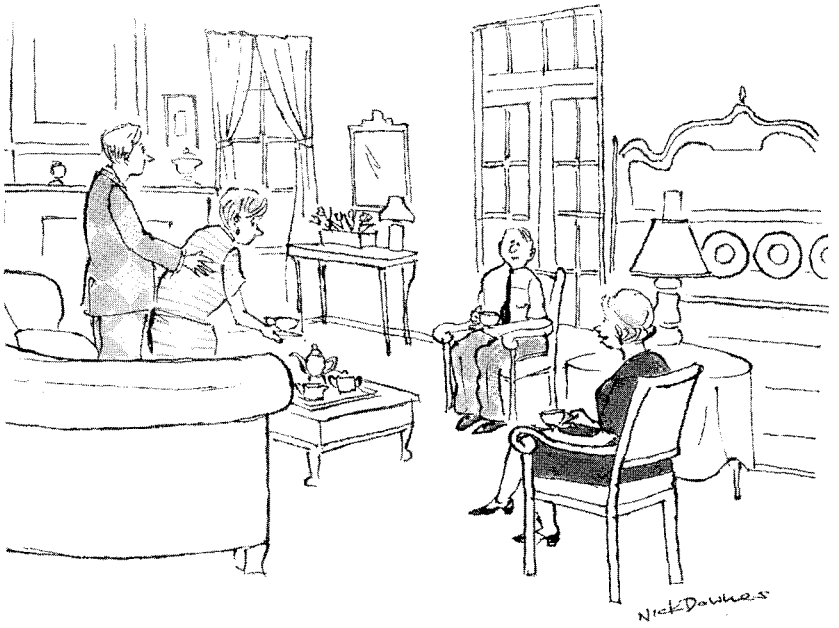
Recent research suggests that the upper story of the Deaf Man's House had not been built when Goya lived there—which is rather a problem, since one can't paint murals on walls that don't exist. Hughes refuses to admit that these, his favorite pictures of Goya's, those most redolent of a gothic *terribilità*, could come from any hand but the master's. Connell at least lays out the evidence for the Black Paintings having been a kind of collaboration between Goya and Martinez Cubells, the man known to have restored them after their removal from the Quinta.

I confess that I am as loath as Hughes to admit the possibility of fraud and forgery, because the Black Paintings do seem to be the real payoff of Goya's whole career. He *should* have painted them. Yet there is a kind of drama in the alternative: If the Black Paintings were in fact the products of Cubells (or some other scam artist), then they must be counted as among the most considerable homages in art history.

Of these two recent lives of Goya, Connell's is the livelier and more concise narrative, as one would expect of the author of *Mrs. Bridge*. Hughes's *Goya* has the advantage of a more ardent advocacy. He becomes pugnacious at times, and even matey, as when he intrudes these thoughts into his reflection on Goya's bullfight etchings: "The rituals of the bullring have inspired a deadening mass of kitsch art—and kitsch writing, too, such as Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*, so unreadable today. (Who would have thought Papa would end up sounding like such a lady? Perhaps only those who remembered what his style owed to an American lesbian, Gertrude Stein.)" Connell is never so matey, nor does he wink so broadly at the subject of Goya's *The Naked Maja*, or squirm quite so uncomfortably at the various ways in which Goya showed himself to be a toady. At his worst he is a little slapdash, as when he finds the Escorial to be "as sinister as an American prison." Yes, the Escorial is prison-like, but are American prisons *particularly* sinister? I've heard that prisons in Istanbul and Capetown can be equally creepy.

In any case it is the subject matter that will fascinate the reader of either book. Goya had the courage, genius, and sheer good luck to take root and thrive as an artist in the soil of Hell. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"Oh, but you must stay for Gerald's Dance of the Seven Veils."

Bush Country

"One might conclude, from his conduct over the past three years," John Podhoretz begins ***Bush Country: How Dubya Became a Great President While Driving Liberals Insane*** **(St. Martin's, 276 pp., $24.95)**, "that George W. Bush was put on this earth to do two things: First, to lead the United States into the third millennium, with all its terrifying challenges and wondrous opportunities. And second, to drive liberals insane. He's succeeding brilliantly at both."

A contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD—and one of the magazine's founders eight years ago—Podhoretz defends the president against the bizarre charges far too often brought against him: that Bush is a "moron," a "puppet," a "fanatic," a "cowboy," etc. On the topic of Bush's religion, for instance, *Bush Country* explains, "You don't have to believe the same things Bush believes about the centrality of Christ in our lives to see what he saw in the September 11 attacks—the first shot in a geopolitical battle between the forces of good and those who thirst for the blood of the innocent." On the topic of Bush's occasional malapropisms, Podhoretz insists, "Bush is the best presidential speaker since Franklin Delano Roosevelt." Indeed, the president has positioned himself as "the master of low expectations"—with an unambiguous political result: "People who think he's a sucker are being played for suckers."

Bush Country is a fun read, filled with telling political observations: "His presidential style is almost completely the reverse of Clinton's. The forty-second president of the United States was daring in the way he pursued his personal hungers. But whenever Clinton tried to be bold in matters of personal policy—such as the mammoth health-care plan designed by his wife, Hillary—the results were usually disastrous. The cautious, careful, even timid Clinton was the victorious Clinton. He closely followed public-opinion polls and tailored his policies to suit the public mood," Podhoretz writes. "By contrast, George W. Bush has remarkable self-discipline in his personal life. To a man, his close aides describe him as the most disciplined person they've ever known. When it comes to matters of policy, however, Bush has the instincts of a gambler."

But Podhoretz is willing as well to shift away from politics and consider the broader, world-historical picture. "Here is what Bush understood: We are vulnerable because we are free. We are vulnerable because we are a beacon of freedom that draws hundreds of millions to bask in liberty's light, even if only for a brief moment. The beacon also provided the perfect guiding light for a team of suicide terrorists with a clever and unpredictable plan."

The combination of immediate political smarts and longer-term understanding studs *Bush Country* with moments of real insight into our current situation. "To the extent that the attack on Bush is purely partisan, all one can say is: that's life. Democrats want a Democrat in the White House, and that can only happen if the American people turn on George W. Bush. Democrats see it as their job to make that happen, and while many of their attacks are unfair, they are justified by the warp-and-woof of American politics," Podhoretz explains. "The *ideological* attack against Bush, however, is a different matter."

And from it all, John Podhoretz builds his case that we are witnessing a great presidency: "George W. Bush has laid out the path this country must take if it is to be secure, and the first steps we've taken down this long road are worthy of celebration. The celebration should be sober, even somber, as befits the challenges of the present moment, the difficulties that lie ahead, and the grieving that still goes on for those lost in the war on terror. But America has done some extraordinary and wonderful things these past three years. Bush Country has found its calling." ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
PTEMBER 31, 2008

Parody

Secondary Cholesterol: The Aftermath

Surgeon General's Warning Signals End of Gravy Train At Myron's Steaks & Chops

By Paula Toback

THREE YEARS after the Surgeon General's Report on Secondary Cholesterol and the strong legislation that followed hard upon it, Myron Patner, the former owner of Myron's Steaks & Chops, a once popular restaurant in Skokie, Illinois, recalled his personal reaction to the report and all that followed in its wake.

"When the Surgeon General's Report on Secondary Cholesterol was first reported on all three major networks and CNN," said Mr. Patner, a small red-faced man in his mid-eighties, "I already knew I was in big trouble. I'd been in business forty-eight years that August the report was issued. How could I not be in trouble? The only thing we served at Myron's that didn't contain cholesterol was the ice cubes in our drinks."

Patner recounted his feelings of outrage, then dismay when, two weeks after the report, the Food and Drug Administration ordered that every steak and chop that came out of his kitchen had to contain a tag, attached to the bone, with a warning, all in capital letters, informing his customers that the meat they were about to enjoy could be dangerous not only to their health but to the health of people sitting in the same room with them. For meat without a bone, strip steaks, filets, and hamburger, a Surgeon General's warning card had to be set on the side of the plate.

"I don't know why," Mr. Patner remarked, "but on chopped liver the government left us alone, at least at first. But it wasn't long before the Surgeon General got his thick fingers into our chopped liver, too, terrific stuff made from my mother's, *b'lev shalom*, own recipe. Though only an appetizer, it was, if I say so myself, one of our signature dishes."

Mr. Patner recalled that it took at least a year or two after the Surgeon General's Report on Smoking before he had to install smoking and non-smoking sections at the restaurant. With the Report on Secondary Cholesterol, things went much faster. In less than a month after the latter was issued, his hostess, a cousin named Rita Birnbaum, had to ask every party, "Seafood or Meat," and seat them accordingly.

"The first Saturday night after I did this," Mr. Patner recollected, "a fellow from the seafood section gets up in the middle of his meal—he was eating our salmon patties, his wife our white-fish special, tail portion—steps over to a nearby table in our meat section, and, to an old customer, Lou Rabinowitz, the retired furrier, a widower, dining alone, he says: 'Excuse me, but my wife has a heart condition. Would you mind eating that porterhouse outside?'

"'Whaddya kiddin' me?' Rabinowitz says.

"'Do I look like I'm kiddin' you?' this other fellow says, real menace in his voice.

Myron Patner

"'Next thing you know the two of them, though both in their seventies, are into name-calling, and, luckily, before things advanced any further, Mushie Stern, our bartender, who won the 1949 middleweight B'nai Brith Youth Organization wrestling championship, is on them in a flash, calming tempers down. But I knew then that the game for steakhouses like Myron's was up.'"

Early the following week, Mr. Patner said, a sad look coming over his face, "Moe Fleishman, the dentist, very successful in real estate, he always used to order our lamb chops, double cut, medium rare, pulls me aside. 'Myron,' he says, 'my wife can't stand the smell of meat. Anything you can do about this to accommodate us?'

"'Yeah,' I said to him. 'Like maybe put a match to the place and move to Boca. Moe, give me a break, I'm running a steakhouse here. What does she want to smell in a steakhouse, daffodils, maybe?'"

The next night, Mr. Patner recalled, an old customer, Earl Mutchnik, a Buick dealer from West Rogers Park, approached him:

"'Myron,' he says, 'you may be seeing a little less of us in future. Heart trouble runs in Esther's family, and she's worried to death about the new report on secondary cholesterol.'

"'Earl,' I said to him, 'when the EPA started with its emission control talk, did I cease to buy from you every year a new Park Avenue? I don't think so.'

"'Myron,' he says, 'it's not me. Me I still dream most nights of sitting naked in the schvitz eating one of your two-inch-thick veal chops. But Esther's mother, both aunts, all went down from heart attack in their middle fifties. She's frightened, Myron. Can you blame her?'

"'Earl,' I said, shrugging, 'what can I tell you?'

"'What I could have told him, of course, is that I, then seventy-six years old myself, from more than half a century in the restaurant business probably inhaled the fumes of more briskets, skirt steak, sirloin, porterhouse, and T-bones than he has taken in pure oxygen, and I'm still here, now eighty-four, to tell the story. He may not be the Surgeon General, but, according to my physician, Harry Rosenberg, who graduated near the top of his class at the University of Illinois medical school, I'm in remarkably good health for a man my age, discounting diabetes.'"

Mr. Patner saw the writing on the wall. He says he didn't have the stomach to turn Myron's into a vegetarian restaurant. The idea nauseated him. He closed the place, retired, and never looked back.

"Sometimes, nowadays, on a Chicago winter's day," Mr. Patner said, a faraway look in his eye, "I'll be in the Loop to see my accountant, or visit with my dentist, and outside an office building, I'll notice, huddled in the wind, a small number of poor bastards, pariahs, forced out into the cold by their fellow workers, chomping on corned-beef sandwiches or a pork chop, maybe gobbling down a quick hot dog, and to myself I'll think, 'You should have been born fifty years earlier. None of us knew it at the time, but we were all living then in the goddamn Garden of Eden.'"

---

the weekly Standard

Confirms Ecstasy-Incontinence Link

FEBRUARY 23, 2004 *Casual Users*

for adult-size diapers, aimed originally at the elderly but now commonplace among [illegible] who attended raves

single women now in their late thirties.

"Honestly, I'd rather have herpes," said Donna Labove of Old Tappan, N.J. "Dates

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cutting-Edge Commentary on Public Policy

HOOVER DIGEST
RESEARCH AND OPINION ON PUBLIC POLICY

SUBSCRIBE
Receive four quarterly issues at the introductory rate of $20.

FREE ISSUE
Receive a complimentary issue of the latest Digest without obligation.

Call 800.935.2882 or visit www.hooverdigest.org

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

In the new issue

Ripples of Battle

The continuing aftershocks of September 11.

In a single morning Americans rediscovered the Hellenic idea that it is not wars per se that are always terrible but the people—Hitler, Tojo, Stalin, Saddam Hussein, and bin Laden—and their repugnant ideas who start them. In this present conflict, **the -isms and -ologies of radical Islamic fundamentalism that have infected millions can be shown to be bankrupt only by their complete repudiation, which tragically must come out of military defeat, subsequent humiliation, and real personal costs for all who embrace them**. Only that way can both adherents and innocents alike learn the wages of allowing their country to be hijacked by agents of intolerance.

Even we in the supposedly enlightened West may also re-learn—from fighting rich and educated terrorists—that conflicts can often arise not out of real but rather out of perceived grievances—or, as the Greeks taught us, from old-fashioned but now passé ideas such as hatred, envy, fear, and self-interest. . . . People and their leaders may go to war not because their bellies ache with hunger but because they believe that they may otherwise lose—or not augment—the sizable fortune, influence, or real power they hold. **The terrorists of Al Qaeda attacked America not simply out of being poor, exploited, abused, or maladjusted but perhaps as much out of loathing, trepidation, and resentment of the West.**

—Victor Davis Hanson

Why Tax Cuts Make Sense

The principal benefits of tax cuts? They keep government spending in check and prompt the development of a highly skilled, productive workforce.

Developments in the federal budget since the early 1980s illustrate the dependence of spending on tax revenue. The Reagan tax cuts of the 1980s helped promote longer-term growth, but they also increased federal deficits and subsequent interest payments on the debt. **The Bush tax cuts will also help future growth and possibly have already begun to stimulate the economy. . . .**

Federal spending declined relative to GDP in the late 1980s and through most of the 1990s. . . . The need to meet payments on the debt helped pressure Congress and the Clinton administration to enact welfare reform, cut defense spending, and increase efforts to rein in federal spending on Social Security and health. It is highly unlikely that any of these would have occurred without the need to adjust spending to growing interest payments on the rising debt due to continuing deficits.

—Gary Becker, Edward Lazear, and Kevin Murphy

To read more, call 800.935.2882 for a free copy of the latest Digest.

HOOVER INSTITUTION

. . . ideas defining a free society

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, Stanford California 94305-6010 Toll-free: 877.466.8374 Fax: 650.723.1687 info@hoover.stanford.edu www.hoover.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHEN OUR TELECOM LAWS WERE WRITTEN, MOBILE PHONES WEREN'T EXACTLY MOBILE.

Today's cell phones aren't just smaller.

They are everywhere. Just one example of how dramatically and quickly technology has changed the way we all communicate.

Unfortunately, our telecom laws are stuck in the past, written during a time when phone calls were only made over phone lines, when cable only delivered television and when choice and competition were the exception, not the rule.

It's a whole new world in telecommunications.

It's time for the laws to catch up to our lives and unleash tomorrow's innovations, services and choices today.

YOUR LOCAL TELECOM COMPANIES WANT TO BRING YOU THE FUTURE...FASTER.

USTA
UNITED STATES TELECOM ASSOCIATION

www.thefuturefaster.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED